

DIVINE ILLUMINATION

IN AUGUSTINIAN AND FRANCISCAN THOUGHT

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I am the author of this thesis, and all the work within it is my own. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lydia Ann Schumacher", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

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12 August 2009

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, my purpose is to determine why Augustine's theory of knowledge by illumination was rejected by Franciscan theologians at the end of the thirteenth century. My main methodological assumption is that Medieval accounts of *divine* illumination must be interpreted in a *theological* context, or with attention to a scholar's underlying doctrines of God and of the human mind as the image of God, inasmuch as the latter doctrine determines one's understanding of the nature of the mind's cognitive work, and illumination illustrates cognition.

In the first chapter, I show how Augustine's understanding of illumination derives from his Trinitarian theology. In the second chapter, I use the same theological methods of inquiry to identify continuity of thought on illumination in Augustine and Anselm. The third chapter covers the events of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries that had an impact on the interpretation of illumination, including the Greek and Arabic translation movements and the founding of universities and mendicant orders. In this chapter, I explain how the first Franciscan scholars transformed St. Francis of Assisi's spiritual ideals into a theological and philosophical system, appropriating the Trinitarian theology of Richard of St. Victor and the philosophy of the Arab scholar Avicenna in the process.

Bonaventure is typically hailed the great synthesizer of early Franciscan thought and the last and best proponent of traditional Medieval Augustinian thought. In the fourth chapter, I demonstrate that Bonaventure's Victorine doctrine of the Trinity both enabled and motivated him to assign originally Avicennian meanings to philosophical arguments of Augustine and Anselm that were incompatible with the original ones. In the name of Augustine, in other words, Bonaventure introduced a theory of knowledge that is not Augustinian. In the fifth chapter, my aim is to throw the non-Augustinian character of Bonaventure's illumination theory into sharper relief through a discussion of knowledge and illumination in the thought of his Dominican contemporary Thomas Aquinas. Although Aquinas is usually supposed to reject illumination theory, I show that he only objects to the Franciscan interpretation of the account, even while he bolsters a genuinely Augustinian account of knowledge and illumination by updating it in the Aristotelian forms of philosophical argumentation that were current at the time.

In the final chapter, I explain why late thirteenth-century Franciscans challenged illumination theory, even after Bonaventure had enthusiastically championed it. In this context, I explain that that they did not reject their predecessor's standard of knowledge outright, but only sought to eradicate the intellectually offensive interference of illumination, as he had defined it, which they perceived as inconsistent with the standard, in the interest of promulgating it.

In concluding, I reiterate the importance of interpreting illumination as a function of Trinitarian theology. This approach throws the function of illumination in Augustine's thought into relief and facilitates the effort to identify continuity and discontinuity amongst Augustine and his Medieval readers, which in turn makes it possible to identify the reasons for the late Medieval decline of divine illumination theory and the rise of an altogether unprecedented epistemological standard.

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*Realities...must be learned and sought out not
from names, but rather through themselves.*

-Plato, Cratylus 439B

Realities signified are to be valued more highly than their signs.

-Augustine, De magistro 9.25

*It would be unreasonable and silly to look at words rather than
at the power of the meanings. Anyone seeking to understand divine
things should never do this, for this is the procedure followed
by those who...do not wish to know what a particular phrase means
or how to convey its sense through equivalent but more efficient phrases.*

-Pseudo-Dionysius, The Divine Names 708C

INTRODUCTION

Throughout his writings, St. Augustine speaks of divine illumination as the condition of possibility of all human knowledge. For most of the Middle Ages, his theory remained intelligible and authoritative. By the end of the thirteenth century, however, the account of knowledge by illumination had been abandoned. Ironically, it was pronounced untenable by members of the Franciscan order, who claimed most emphatically to work in continuity with Augustine.

In this thesis, my purpose is to identify why late thirteenth-century Franciscans rejected Augustine's illumination account, especially after predecessors as noteworthy as Bonaventure had championed it with great enthusiasm. While I acknowledge that Bonaventure employed Augustine's traditional forms of words and metaphors, especially illumination, I will show that he did so in the effort to articulate a decidedly Franciscan definition of the nature of knowledge and to lend his views authoritative support. Although he used Augustine's terms, he meant something different by them. When Bonaventure's Franciscan successors eliminated illumination, consequently, they did not react against Augustine but Bonaventure. Even though they rejected illumination as Bonaventure construed it, late thirteenth-century Franciscans did not abandon the Seraphic Doctor's innovative views on knowledge. To the contrary, they eliminated illumination in an attempt to eradicate what seemed to undermine the plausibility of the Franciscan definition of knowledge itself.

On my contention, identifying the stark contrast between Augustinian and Franciscan thought on divine illumination is the crucial preliminary step to determining that a perceived inconsistency is the reason for the late thirteenth-century Franciscan rejection of illumination. Operating on the assumption that the use of the same terms is indicative of adherence to the same beliefs, past scholars have virtually universally conflated Augustinian and Franciscan thought on this topic. Implicitly questioning that assumption, I devote the majority of this thesis to differentiating Augustinian from Franciscan thought on divine illumination.

In order to understand the theory as it has been formulated in the two distinct traditions, I argue that it is not enough to take arguments concerning illumination presented by Augustinian and Franciscan thinkers at face value. Instead, one must closely attend from the metaphor that thinkers in both traditions invoke to the concept of knowledge the metaphor is used to signify. In the case of *divine* illumination, I argue that it is essential to attend to the *theological* assumptions at play, because these endow philosophical arguments about knowledge with meaning. It is by evaluating the theological presuppositions that underlie a given illumination account that one can identify where scholars do and do not work in continuity with Augustine as it concerns the theory of knowledge by divine illumination. In this introduction, I explain how I endeavour to interpret illumination theologically in the present work. First, however, I review some of the existing scholarship on divine illumination in Augustinian and Franciscan thought.

Scholarship on Divine Illumination in Augustinian Thought

According to scholarly consensus, “no other important aspect of Augustine’s philosophy is as difficult to understand and to explain as this notion that God in some way illumines the mind of man.”¹ Because of the many ambiguities surrounding illumination theory, scholars have yet to agree on the function Augustine assigns it in cognition. Some argue that Augustine never intended to present a coherent and comprehensive account of cognition. He simply assumed his meaning would be intelligible to his readers.² For this reason, they say that he made no effort to compile his whole doctrine of knowledge in any specific work, but remained content to scatter his remarks about the divine light all throughout his writings.³

Those that assume Augustine to be such an unsystematic thinker proclaim it pointless to strive to decipher the meaning of illumination.⁴ Others insist there is an account to be found in the pages of his works and labour to uncover it. In the section

¹ Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine’s Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 92; see also Gareth B. Matthews, “Knowledge and Illumination,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 180.

² R. Allers, “St. Augustine’s Doctrine on Illumination,” *Franciscan Studies* 12 (1952): 27-46.

³ C.E. Scheutzinger, *The German Controversy on Saint Augustine’s Illumination Theory* (New York: Pageant Press, 1960), 11, ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

that immediately follows, I quote a number of key passages on illumination from Augustine's writings. Passages that eventually became standard citations in scholastic disputation are indicated with an (*).

In these passages, Augustine suggests that the function of illumination in cognition is four-fold. It sustains the process of cognition and serves as the source of the content of cognition, cognitive certitude, and the cognitive capacity itself. By playing these parts in 'ordinary' cognition, illumination is also said to communicate knowledge of God, although interpreters rarely make it clear how this happens.⁵

After this brief review of Augustine's references to illumination, I outline the major interpretations of the account that have been the focus of discussion in the late Medieval and modern periods.⁶ In the context of explaining the most well known interpretations of illumination, I mention the problems typically associated with each one of them, the very problems I will have to resolve in presenting an interpretation of illumination.

AUGUSTINE ON ILLUMINATION

Cognitive Process

* The earth is visible and light is visible but the earth cannot be seen unless it is brightened by light. So, likewise for those things, which...everyone understands and acknowledges...to be most true, one must believe they cannot be understood unless they are illumined by something else as by their own sun. Therefore just as in the sun one may remark three certain things, namely that it is that it shines and that it illumines, so also in that most hidden God whom you wish to know there are three things, namely, that He is, that He is known, and that He makes other things to be known.⁷

⁵ Gareth B. Matthews, "Knowledge and Illumination," 183.

⁶ For a more complete account the various illumination theories earlier Medieval thinkers espoused, see my article, "Divine Illumination," in *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming in 2011).

⁷ Augustine, *Soliloquia*, trans. Thomas F. Gilligan (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 1.8.15. See also the Latin-English edition of Augustine's *Soliloquies and Immortality of the Soul*, ed. Gerard Watson (Warminster, Aris and Phillips, 1990): *Nam et terra visibilis et lux; sed terra nisi luce inlustrata videri non potest. Ergo et illa, quae in disciplines traduntur, quae quisquis intellegit verissima esse nulla dubitatione concedit, credendum est ea non posse intellegi, nisi ab alio quasi suo sole inlustrantur.*

* He who teaches us, namely, Christ...is the Wisdom which every rational soul does indeed consult...If the soul is sometimes mistaken, this does not come about because of any defect on the part of the truth it consulted just as it is not through any defect in the light outside us that our bodily eyes are often deceived.⁸

The nature of the intellectual mind is so formed as to see those things, which according to the disposition of the Creator are subjoined to intelligible things in the natural order, in a sort of incorporeal light of its own kind, as the eye of the flesh sees the things that lie about it in this corporeal light, of which light it is made to be receptive and to which it is adapted.⁹

You have seen many true things and you distinguished them by that light which shone upon you when you saw them; raise your eyes to that light itself and fix them upon it, if you can...It is impossible, however, to fix your gaze upon this, so as to behold it clearly and distinctly...Yet this very light reveals to you those...things that are likewise certain.¹⁰

Cognitive Content

* If both of us see that what you say is true and that what I say is true then where I ask do we see this? I do not see it in you, nor you in me, but both of us see it in the immutable truth which is higher than our minds...the light from the Lord our God.¹¹

⁸ Idem., *De magistro*, 11.38, trans. Robert P. Russell in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 59. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004). CCL 29, 196: *Ille autem, qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus, id est incommutabilis dei virtus atque sempiterna sapientia, quam quidem omnis rationalis anima consulit, sed tantum cuique panditur, quantum capere propter propriam siue malam siue bonam voluntatem potest. Et se quando fallitur, non fit vitio consulate veritatis, ut neque huius quae foris est, lucis vitium est, quod corporei oculi saepe falluntur, quam lucem de rebus visibilibus consuli fatemur, ut teas nobis, quantum cernere valemus, ostendat.*

⁹ Idem., *De Trinitate* 12.15.24, trans. Stephen McKenna (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002). CCL 50, 378: *Sed potius credendum est mentis intellectualis ita conditam esse naturam ut rebus intellegibilibus naturali ordine disponente conditore subijuncta sic esta videat in quadam luce sui generis incorporeal quemadmodum oculus carnis videt quae in hac corporea luce circumadiacent, cuius lucis capax eique congruens est creatus.*

¹⁰ Ibid., 15.27.50 (CCL 50, 532-3): *Nempe ergo multa vera vidisti eaque discreuisti ab illa luce qua tibi lucente vidisti. Attolle oculos in ipsam lucem et eos in ea fige si potes...Sed ad hoc dilucide perspicueque cernendum non potes ibi aciem figere...sed illa lux quae non est quod tu et hoc tibi ostendit aliud esse illas incorporeas similitudines corporum et aliud esse verum quod eis reprobat intellegentia contuemur. Haec et alia similiter certa oculis tuis interioribus lux illa monstrauit.*

¹¹ Idem., *Confessiones* 12.25.35, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). CCL 27, 235: *Si ambo videmus verum esse quod dicis et ambo videmus verum esse quod dico, ubi, quae so, id videmus? Nec ego utique in te nec tu in me, sed ambo ipsa quae supra mentes nostras est incommutabili veritate. Cum ergo de ipsa domini dei nostri luce non contendamus.*

The things which we behold with the mind...we directly perceive as present in that inner light of truth...if one sees what is true...one is being taught...by the realities themselves made manifest by the enlightening action of God from within.¹²

* We contemplate the inviolable truth...in the light of the eternal types.¹³

The ideas (forms/*formae*, species/*species*, reasons/*rationes*) are certain original and principle forms of things, i.e. reasons, fixed and unchangeable...eternal and existing always in the same state, contained in the Divine Intelligence. Though they themselves neither come into being nor pass away, nevertheless everything which can come into being and pass away...is formed in accord with these ideas....it is by participation in these that whatever exists in whatever manner it does exist...the rational soul...can contemplate these ideas...by a certain inner and intelligible countenance, indeed an eye of its own....in the measure that [the rational soul] has clung to God...[it is] imbued in some way and illumined by Him with light, intelligible light...and discerns...those reasons...called ideas, or forms, or species.¹⁴

¹² Idem., *mag.* 12.40 (CCL 29, 197-8): *Cum vero de his agitur, quae mente conspiciuntur, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur, quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce veritatis, qua ipse...Ergo ne hunc quidem doceo vera dicens vera intuentem; docetur enim non verbis meis, sed ipsis rebus deo intus pendente manifestis.*

¹³ Idem., *trin.* 9.6.9 (CCL 50, 301): *sed intuemur inviolabilem veritatem ex qua perfecte quantum possumus definiamus non quails sit uniuscuiusque hominis mens, sed quails esse sempiternis rationibus debeat.*

¹⁴ Idem., *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* 46, trans. David L. Mosher (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982). CCL 44A, 70-3: *ideas...vel formas vel species dicere, ut e re et verbo transferre videamur. Sunt namque ideae principales quaedam formae vel rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, quae ipsarum formarum non sunt ac per hoc aeternae ac semper eodem modo sese habentes, quae divina intellegentia continentur. Et cum ipsae neque oriuntur neque intereant, secundum eas tamen formari dicitur omne quod oriri et interire potest et omne quod oritur et interit. Anima vero negatur eas intueri posse nisi rationalis, ea sui parte qua excellit, id est ipsa mente atque ratione, quasi quadam facie vel oculo suo interiore atque intellegibili...Sed anima rationalis inter eas res, quae sunt a deo conditae omnia superat et deo proxima est, quando pura est; eique in quantum caritate cohaeserit, in tantum ab eo lumine illo intellegibili perfusa quodammodo et inlustrata cernit non per corporeos oculos, sed per ipsius sui principale quo excellit, id est per intellegentiam suam, istas rationes, quarum visione fit beatissima. Quas rationes, ut dictum est, sive ideas sive formas sive species sive rationes licet vocare, et multis conceditur appellare quod libet, sed paucissimis videre quod verum est.*

Cognitive Certitude

That light revealed to our interior eyes these and other things that are likewise certain.¹⁵

Cognitive Capacity

He himself finds this true “in the truth itself, the light of the mind.”¹⁶

“There is a mind capable of the intellectual light, by which we distinguish between right and wrong.”¹⁷

Knowledge of God

The Light by which the soul is illumined in order that it may see and truly understand everything...is God Himself...when it tries to behold the Light, it trembles in its weakness and finds itself unable to do so...When it is carried off and after being withdrawn from the senses of the body is made present to this vision in a more perfect manner, it also sees above itself that Light, in whose illumination it is enabled to see all the objects that it sees and understands in itself.¹⁸

INTERPRETATIONS OF ILLUMINATION

The approaches to interpreting Augustine’s illumination theory that late Medieval and modern thinkers have taken can be classified into two main categories.¹⁹ There are interpretations of illumination that define it in one way or another as an extrinsic force, including ontologism and innatism, and the three closely related interpretations: Franciscanism, idealism, and formalism. In the

¹⁵ Idem., *trin.* 15.27.50 (CCL 50A, 533): *Haec et alia similiter certa oculis tuis interioribus lux illa monstrauit.*

¹⁶ Ibid., 14.7.9 (CCL 50A, 434): *sed quas versa esse etiam ipse inuenit sive apud se sive ipsa mentis duce veritate.*

¹⁷ Idem., *De civitate Dei* 12.3, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 2003). CCL 48, 358: *De vitiis quipped nunc loquimur eius naturae, cui mens inest capax intellegibilis lucis, qua discernitur justum ab injusto.*

¹⁸ Idem., *De Genesi ad litteram* 12.31.59, ed. P. Agaesse and A. Solignac in *Oeuvres de St. Augustin*, vols 48-9: *Nam illud iam ipse Deus est, haec autem creatura, quamuis rationalis et intellectualis ad eius imaginem facta, quae cum conatur lumen illud intueri palpitat infirmitate et minus valet. Inde est tamen quidquid intellegit sicut valet. Cum ergo illuc rapitur et a carnalibus subtracta sensibus illi expressius visioni praesentatur non spatiis localibus, sed modo quodam suo, etiam supra se videt illud quo adiuta videt quidquid etiam in se intellegendo videt.* Translations taken from *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 2 vols. trans. John Hammond Taylor (New York: Paulist, 1982).

¹⁹ For more complete surveys of the history of the interpretation of illumination theory, refer to Nash and Scheutzinger.

second, place, there is the Thomist interpretation of illumination, according to which the divine light is an intrinsic one.

While all the interpretations assume illumination to be the source of the intrinsic cognitive capacity, only the Thomist interpretation limits the light to that. All the other interpretations affirm that more divine light must be super-added to the natural light of reason in order for acts of knowing to be successful. In the ontologist and innatist interpretations, for example, illumination is involved in the cognitive process and affords conceptual content and certitude; in the Franciscan and idealist interpretations, it enters into the process of cognition and guarantees the truth and certitude of ideas; on the formal interpretation, it merely serves as the guarantor of certitude.

By positing this additional, extrinsic illumination, such interpretations tend to put human persons in a passive position in their own cognitive acts, at least to some extent. The intrinsic interpretation, by contrast, emphasizes the active nature of the knowing agent, who is not passively illumined so much as illumined *to illumine* reality. Below, I outline the above-mentioned interpretations and the problems inherent in them.

Ontologism

The seventeenth-century Cartesian philosopher Nicholas Malebranche is the most famous proponent of the ontologist interpretation of illumination, although earlier Renaissance figures such as Marsilio Ficino also espoused this theory, as did nineteenth and twentieth-century scholars like Vincenzo Gioberti, G. Ubaghs, and Johannes Hessen.²⁰ Malebranche operated on the dualist assumption that the body and the mind do not interact. On the basis of this assumption, he contended that the only way to know the world is to see it ‘in God’. For Malebranche, in other words, the divine light immediately imparts the content of knowledge, whether sensible or intellectual, by allowing the intellect to see things as they subsist in the mind of God.

²⁰ See Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 102, ff. and C.E. Scheutzinger, *Augustine’s Illumination Theory*, 30, ff.

Divine illumination thus performs the intellect's cognitive work on its behalf and gives it certitude with respect to its ideas, which are divinely given.

The most obvious problem with the ontologist interpretation is that it seems to provide premature recourse to the thoughts or even the vision of God. It also appears to bypass the empirical sources of human knowledge and natural cognitive processes, and thus undermines the faculties of sensation and imagination, precluding an account of the way knowledge is acquired through abstractive or discursive reasoning. Because all the mind has is fully and directly afforded by God, the ideas the mind entertains and its certitude about them do not really seem to be based on a person's own experiences and efforts to understand reality.²¹ On the ontologist interpretation, the mind's role in its own act of knowing is virtually eliminated.

Innatism

The interpretation of Augustinian illumination most commonly assumed by contemporary scholars is an innatist one, such as the one John Rist espouses.²² Rist and many others seem to believe Augustine formulated his illumination theory for two main reasons. The first reason was to rebut the claims of the global academic sceptics who were influential in Augustine's day.²³ On Rist's account, Augustine accepted the Platonic distinction between sensible and intelligible realities. He granted to the sceptics that, "everything which the bodily sense touches and which is called sensible is constantly changing...that what does not remain stable cannot be

²¹ Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 104.

²² See John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); see also Richard Ackworth, "Two Studies in Augustine's Thought: God and Human Knowledge," *The Downside Review* 75 (1957): 207-14; Vernon J. Bourke, "Light of Love: Augustine on Moral Illumination," *Mediaevalia* 4 (1978): 13-31; Brian Hardin, "Skepticism, Illumination and Christianity in Augustine's *Contra Academicos*," *Augustinian Studies* 34:2 (2003): 197-212; Peter King, "Augustine on the Impossibility of Teaching," *Metaphilosophy* 29 (1998): 179-95; Robert E. Lauder, "Augustine: Illumination, Mysticism, and Person," in *Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994); Louis H. Mackey, "The Mediator Mediated: Faith and Reason in Augustine's *De magistro*," *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1982): 135-65; Gareth B. Matthews, "Knowledge and Illumination," 171-85; Michael Mendelson, "By the Things Themselves: Eudaimonism, Direct Acquaintance, and Illumination in Augustine's *De magistro*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39:4 (2001): 467-89; Joseph Owens, "Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 440-59; Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 103-7.

²³ John Rist, *Augustine*, 42, ff.

perceived...[and] therefore that truth in any genuine sense is not something to be expected from the bodily senses.”²⁴ In order to annihilate the threat of scepticism that accompanies the belief that perceptual experience cannot afford true and certain knowledge, Rist holds, Augustine had to prove that the mind has access to eternal and unchanging intelligible truths, which is what he does when he develops his doctrine of divine illumination in the early dialogue *De magistro*.

The second, related reason for formulating an illumination account, which becomes clear in *De magistro*, is to affirm the possibility of teaching and learning. Owing to the transience of sense knowledge and the total depravity of the fallen mind, Rist’s Augustine concludes that human beings have no recourse to truth.²⁵ If they are to teach and learn anything, consequently, they must already innately know what they teach or learn. Moreover, they must know truth in a direct or immediate sense, as Plato supposedly taught, if knowledge is to be absolutely certain.²⁶

Although Augustine rejected in *De magistro* the Platonic notion that acquiring knowledge simply entails recollecting ideas perceived before birth, Rist contends that he continued to affirm that the mind is equipped with the innate knowledge of certain immaterial principles (*rationes*) or impressed ideas not unlike Plato’s Forms, which ultimately subsist in the mind of God. Although the ideas “are no longer retained memories of a previous life, they are in some sense constitutive of the human soul.”²⁷ Rist admits that it is difficult to determine just how many of these innate ideas Augustine counts as residing in the mind. Still, he insists that they are, for Augustine, the rules of judgment that cannot be judged and that enable the intellect to make judgments as instantiated reasons are compared with intelligible ones.²⁸

According to Rist, the *a priori* rules are not only given through divine illumination, but illumination is also required for the use of the rules in teaching and

²⁴ Augustine, *div. qu.* 9 (CCL 44A, 16-17): *Omne quod corporeus sensus adtingit, quod et sensibile dicitur, sine ulla intermissione temporis commutatur...Quod autem non manet percipi non potest; illud enim percipitur quod scientia comprehenditur; comprehendere autem non potest quod sine intermissione mutatur. Non est igitur exspectanda sinceritas veritatis a sensibus corporis.*

²⁵ John Rist, *Augustine*, 29.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 30, 74.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

learning.²⁹ In both cases, it is Christ who illumines. He initially impresses the divine ideas on the human intellect, and He mysteriously, interiorly, enables the intellect to teach and learn by means of the rules, and thus illumines in an ongoing sense.³⁰ The light that makes things knowable to the mind is not the mind itself, consequently, but God, or His Forms, as it was for Plato.

Although the rules are accessible to all, it is only those who put faith in Christ and open themselves up to His influence by shunning the distractions that come through the senses that become aware that it is His ideas that are impressed in the soul and constitute the human power of knowing. This awareness is what makes the knowing agent certain about the things outside the self, the self itself, and God.³¹

By positing the role of innate rules of judgment received through illumination, the use of which is regulated by Christ the illuminator, Augustine saves knowledge from scepticism and affirms the possibility of teaching and learning in *De magistro*. Incidentally, virtually all innatist interpreters of Augustine focus their hermeneutic efforts on this dialogue and turn to other texts primarily to supplement the inquiry into *De magistro*. Augustine avoids scepticism in this work by affirming that human minds are wholly dependent upon the extrinsic help of Christ in their own acts of knowing.

While this interpretation of *De magistro*, according to which ideas of things are latent in the human mind and summoned up by Christ, is the most seemingly obvious interpretation of the text read at face value, and is therefore widely though variously affirmed, it is not without problems. Many of the problems to which the ontologist interpretation is subject apply to the innatist one as well: the innatist account seems to bypass normal cognitive processes. The supernatural appears to overtake the natural. As Ronald Nash has argued, “any account of Augustine’s...doctrine of illumination must deal satisfactorily with three paradoxes in his thought,”³² namely, that Augustine describes the intellect as both active and passive; that he speaks of the Forms the mind knows as in the mind and outside the

²⁸ Ibid., 50, 76.

²⁹ Ibid., 32, 77.

³⁰ Ibid., 37, 78.

³¹ Ibid., 66.

mind, or in the mind of God; and thirdly, that he describes the human mind as the light that does and does not make knowledge possible. With so much help coming from Christ, however, it becomes difficult for the innatist interpreter to resolve these paradoxes in a satisfactory way, that is, to give an account of the sense in which the human mind is just as much responsible for its own knowing processes, for the attainment of cognitive content and cognitive certitude as God is.

Franciscanism, Idealism, & Formalism

The classic Franciscan interpretation of illumination formulated by Bonaventure and his colleagues, which I will explain at length in the fourth chapter of this work, holds that illumination is the source of *a priori* or ‘transcendental’ concepts, which are impressed on the ‘active intellect’. On this account, the reasons are not the objects of knowledge as in the two foregoing interpretations. Rather, they supervise the intellect’s efforts to organize empirical data and form ideas about reality. They ensure that the ideas formed directly correspond to the ideas in the mind of God and therefore certify them. Some early thirteenth-century Franciscans like William of Auvergne, Roger Bacon, and Roger Marston affirmed with the Arab scholar Avicenna that the active intellect is actually God Himself: that it is the divine rather than the human mind that oversees human knowing. E. Portalie has more recently espoused this interpretation of illumination.³³

The idealist interpretation of illumination Bruce Bubacz has advanced bears striking resemblance to the Franciscan interpretation.³⁴ For Bubacz, illumination is the source of *a priori* concepts, which he calls ‘principal ideas’. One gains access to these ideas when one attends to the ‘inner man’, where the ideas are stored. The fact that the principal ideas are innate does not undermine the empirical sources of human knowledge, Bubacz insists. On what he calls his ‘cartographic model’, the principal ideas only provide a blueprint or map for comprehending the ‘terrain’ of created reality and for classifying the objects encountered there. In sum, the principal ideas

³² Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 104.

³³ E. Portalie’s article on Augustine has been reprinted in *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, trans. Ralph Bastian (Chicago: Regnery, 1960).

act as rules of judgment. In the last chapter of his work, Bubacz likens Augustinian illumination understood ‘cartographically’ to idealist epistemologies and thus recasts the theory in a non-theistic manner, which he hopes contemporary philosophers will find plausible.

Formalism is the interpretation of Augustinian illumination espoused by Etienne Gilson. According to Gilson, Augustine did not give a fully developed or systematic account of knowledge. Even so, he apparently believed the mind is naturally competent to produce its own ideas. The divine light is the natural light of the human intellect. For this reason, it cannot be said that God “takes the place of the intellect when it thinks the truth.”³⁵ Illumination, in short, leaves the integrity of the human intellect intact.

Although Gilson denies that divine ideas are impressed upon the mind to produce the content of cognition itself, he does affirm that the innate ideas act as the rules by which the mind validates its own ideas. Illumination, in other words, plays a regulative or formal role in cognition, confirming that human judgments are absolutely true and certain.

Although illumination and the *a priori* concepts it affords do not threaten to impose the content of cognition when interpreted in any of the three aforementioned ways, it does seem to interfere in some sense with the process of cognition, especially when God Himself is defined as the active intellect. Where the divine light guarantees the truth and certitude of the mind’s ideas on behalf of the mind, it seemingly reduces the intellect to a state of passivity in its own cognitive activity.³⁶ This means the truth and certitude of the mind’s knowledge is somewhat artificial, and the artificial nature of knowledge may lead to scepticism as regards the possibility of attaining true and certain knowledge, which is precisely the terminus

³⁴ Bruce Bubacz, *Saint Augustine’s Theory of Knowledge: A Contemporary Analysis* (New York: Edwin Mellin Press, 1981). See also Bubacz’ “Augustine’s Illumination Theory and Epistemic Structuring,” *Augustinian Studies* 11 (1980): 35-48.

³⁵ Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, trans. L.E.M. Lynch (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), 79. For the full discussion of illumination, see 77-97.

³⁶ Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 104.

illumination is supposed to help the intellect avoid.³⁷

Thomism

All of the aforementioned interpretations of illumination envisage its influence in one way or another as an extrinsic one. The divine light is extrinsic inasmuch as it super-imposes *a priori* concepts, which may afford the truth content and certitude of cognition or simply regulate acts of cognition in some respect.³⁸ All such interpretations emphasize the radical reliance of the human intellect upon continuous divine aid in what is supposedly a characteristically Augustinian way.

In the interpretation of illumination promulgated by Thomas Aquinas, there is no place for *a priori* ideas of things. The intellectual capacity to engage in abstraction, as Aristotle described it, is an innate or intrinsic one, but this is in no sense true of the ideas that occupy the mind, which are constructed through abstractive reasoning. For the Thomist, the gift of reason through illumination empowers the intellect to independently perform its abstractive operations. One can indirectly accredit God with all those operations performed at the initiative of the human person, insofar as He endowed the gift of reason, but one cannot claim that God compels or interferes with acts of cognition.

Modern advocates of a Thomist interpretation of Augustine include Maurice De Wulf, Charles Boyer, and F. Cayre. Although there is no philosophical problem inherent in the claim that God gives the intellectual power, and many scholars are willing to recognize the genius of this ‘intrinsic’ interpretation of illumination, they virtually unanimously deny that it captures what Augustine meant by illumination.³⁹

Some go so far as to say that Aquinas’ Aristotelian rendering of illumination is “contrary to the [Platonic] spirit of Augustine’s philosophy,”⁴⁰ according to which human ideas are extrinsically and aprioristically given to the mind rather than

³⁷ Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 447.

³⁸ Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 78.

³⁹ Ibid., 41; see also Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 83-6; Robert E. Lauder, “Augustine: Illumination, Mysticism, and Person,” 181; and Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian*, 105.

⁴⁰ Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 100.

constructed by it on the basis of experience. Illumination and abstraction are defined as mutually exclusive theories of knowledge, and although the Aristotelian interpretation of illumination has its virtues, scholars tend to agree that it cannot draw support from Augustine, and that Thomas was well aware that he undermined Augustine's intended meaning when he formulated his views on the matter.⁴¹ Despite the fact that the various 'extrinsic' interpretations of illumination are accompanied by more philosophical problems, they are generally regarded as more faithful renderings of Augustine's original views.

Scholarship on Divine Illumination in Franciscan Thought

There are two book-length studies on the decline of divine illumination theory in the thirteenth-century Franciscan school: Patrick James Doyle's thesis titled, *The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory in the Franciscan School, 1285-1300: Peter of Trabes, Richard of Middleton, William of Ware* (1983) and Steven P. Marrone's two-volume work, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and the Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century* (2001).

Both Doyle and Marrone begin their studies with a review of the historiography of late Medieval philosophy. In preparing to discuss their researches, I will do the same.⁴² As Doyle and Marrone note, scholarly interest in the later Middle Ages was renewed in the late nineteenth century, around the time Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. In this work, the Holy Father summoned Catholic thinkers to inquire anew into scholastic thought and that of Thomas Aquinas in particular. At the time, scholars were relatively unaware of the vast differences in perspective amongst scholastic thinkers. When Leo called intellectuals to study the Dominican Aquinas, he did so on the assumption that the latter was the best representative of the scholastic intellectual synthesis all thinkers of that era advocated.

⁴¹ Ibid., 96.

⁴² In *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure's Philosophy* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973), John Francis Quinn gives a clear and comprehensive survey of Medieval studies since the late nineteenth century. This work should be consulted for a more detailed analysis of the scholarly developments mentioned here.

⁴² Ibid., 35-6.

The synthesis was an Aristotelian one. Most late nineteenth-century thinkers saw thirteenth-century thought as primarily focused on incorporating the newly translated resources of Aristotle. Since Thomas had accomplished this most effectively, he was viewed as the scholastic thinker *par excellence*. Bonaventure, who had appropriated Aristotle less extensively and rather critically, was not seen as the proponent of a system distinct from that of Aquinas but as an incipient Thomist.

These assumptions about the monolithic character of high Medieval thought are reflected in the work of the acclaimed “founder of modern scholarship on Medieval philosophy,”⁴³ Maurice De Wulf. De Wulf argued that scholastics universally accepted a system organized around Aristotelian principles, disagreeing only on minor points of detail.⁴⁴ The first significant challenge to De Wulf’s thesis came from Franz Ehrle, who argued for two brands of scholasticism, the Aristotelian and the Augustinian, where the Augustinians or ‘neo-Augustinians’ as he called them simply were Franciscans.⁴⁵ Pierre Mandonnet then contended that there were in fact three main schools of thought in the thirteenth century: the Aristotelian, the Augustinian, and the Latin Averroism of Siger of Brabant.

Etienne Gilson opened a new chapter in the historiography of Medieval philosophy by distinguishing the main Medieval intellectual systems at an unprecedented level of precision. It was he who finally established that Bonaventure was not in fact an incipient Thomist but the promulgator of an altogether distinctive system, which was in Gilson’s view, the last and fullest expression of the Augustinian system.⁴⁶ Although Gilson believed that both Bonaventure and Aquinas were proponents of distinctly ‘Christian’ philosophies, he saw those philosophies as assuming decidedly different shapes.

According to Gilson, Bonaventure formulated his philosophical account on the Augustinian assumption that there is no philosophy outside Christian wisdom, whereas Aquinas developed his on the basis of the Aristotelian assumption that

⁴³ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 18. See Maurice De Wulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, 3rd ed., trans. P. Coffey (London: Longman, Greens & Co., 1909).

⁴⁵ Patrick James Doyle, “The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory in the Franciscan School” (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1984), 15.

⁴⁶ John Francis Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure’s Philosophy*, 23-4.

reason can work without faith.⁴⁷ While Bonaventure stressed the radical reliance of human reason upon faith, Thomas granted reason some autonomy. Gilson, a self-proclaimed Thomist, saw Bonaventure as the conservative proponent of the longstanding Augustinian tradition and Aquinas as the inventive appropriator of an Aristotelian philosophy that was altogether innovative.⁴⁸ In his view, the thirteenth century was the period during which scholars, including Augustinians, became increasingly aware of the inadequacy of the Augustinian system by comparison to the new Aristotelian one, until they eventually abandoned it.

Both Doyle and Marrone take the work of Gilson as the point of departure for the inquiry into the decline of divine illumination theory in the thirteenth century. Gilson had contended that the acceptance of divine illumination theory in the thirteenth century entailed acceptance of a whole complex of supposedly Augustinian doctrines.⁴⁹ Doyle's project was to determine whether three Franciscan thinkers working in the last fifteen years of the thirteenth century—Peter of Trabes, Richard of Middleton, and William of Ware—rejected other key doctrines in the Augustinian complex when they rejected illumination.

To do this, Doyle recounts each thinker's discussion of a number of the corollary doctrines prior to analyzing their arguments against illumination. In the end, he finds that the rejection of illumination by all three did not entail the abandonment of the other doctrines associated with the Augustinianism of the Franciscan school. In making this discovery, he adds clarity to Gilson's description of the events through which Franciscan thinkers abandoned illumination theory, after they had put forth a concerted but failed effort to find in Augustine's writings a theory of cognition comparable to Aristotle's theory of abstraction.⁵⁰

In his two-volume study, Marrone traces the decline of the illumination account through ten thirteenth-century Augustinian figures, all of which happen to be associated with the Franciscan order. He bases his study on Gilson's assumptions that Franciscans were Augustinians and that the greatest challenge thirteenth-century

⁴⁷ Ibid., 35-6.

⁴⁸ Patrick James Doyle, "The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory," 1-4.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 80 and Etienne Gilson, *History*, 238, 343.

⁵⁰ Patrick James Doyle, "The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory," 13, 42.

thinkers faced was to accommodate Aristotle in their intellectual systems. More strongly than Gilson, Marrone contends that Augustine never intended to provide a thorough account of ordinary human knowledge. Instead, Marrone describes Augustine as the expert on the mystical knowledge of God and on the undefined processes through which He imparts knowledge of Himself to human beings. He sees the decline of divine illumination theory as one that came about as intellectuals moved away from the “symbolic and animist”⁵¹ cognitive theory espoused by Augustine and earlier Medieval thinkers “towards doctrinal clarity and coherence,”⁵² and thus towards the Aristotelian ideal of scientific knowledge, which he affirms laid the foundations for the modern achievements of Descartes and others. For Marrone, the rise of that ideal is inversely proportional to the decline of the longstanding illumination theory in the Augustinian school.⁵³

Marrone begins his study early in the thirteenth century with William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste. These two Franciscan sympathizers attempted to reconcile Aristotle and Augustinian illumination theory. Subsequently, he discusses what he calls the ‘classic’ Augustinian illumination account formulated by Bonaventure and his associates, such as John Pecham and Matthew of Acquasparta. Conservative Augustinians like Bonaventure, Marrone explains, felt unprepared to forfeit the outdated theory of knowledge that bolstered traditional religious practices and affirmed the intimacy of the human mind to God, even though they saw that Aristotle’s ideal gave an account of the empirical sources of human knowledge and natural cognitive processes in a way Augustine utterly failed to do. For this reason, they strove to recast the cherished illumination theory so that it met the new Aristotelian standards, which demanded hardcore evidence for the justification of beliefs.⁵⁴ They attempted to do what Augustine himself had failed to do, which was to systematize an authentically Augustinian theory of knowledge by illumination.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and the Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 11.

⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 247.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 18.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 134.

In the second volume of his study, Marrone shows how figures working later in the century, such as Henry of Ghent and Vital du Four, came to the realization that Bonaventure's efforts were futile. There was no plausible way to systematize Augustine's "scattered thoughts about God's intervention"⁵⁶ in human knowledge. Henry worked to qualify those thoughts in order to make them tenable, yet William of Ware and his student Duns Scotus found his work inadequate and finally determined to eliminate illumination from ordinary human knowledge altogether. Finally, in Scotus' thought, the Aristotelian cognitive ideal prevailed.

In concluding his study, Marrone reminds the reader that Medieval historians normally identify a late Medieval school of thought where philosophical doctrines are held in common. The problem with this approach, he contends, is that there is no doctrinal continuity within the Augustinian school as scholars usually suppose. Within the school, very different opinions about illumination theory, which was the hallmark of the school, were entertained. Consequently, the author insists that the existing understanding of late Medieval schools must be replaced with a "non-doctrinal conception of allegiance."⁵⁷ On this concept, members of the same school do not adhere to any of the same philosophical principles. They merely use the same metaphors. According to Marrone, this idea of scholarly allegiance is the only one that makes sense of the late Medieval situation, in which the only interest common to all was the interest in incorporating Aristotle.

Divine Illumination in Augustinian and Franciscan Thought

For all their differences, scholarly interpreters of illumination in Augustine's thought as well as the thirteenth-century decline of the theory mostly have one thing in common. They assume that the effective way to assess issues pertaining to illumination is to go directly to arguments about illumination, that is, to take philosophical arguments about knowledge at face value, and to take those arguments as the point of departure for efforts to interpret illumination. I do not operate on the assumption that this is the best way to grasp the meaning of illumination, because I

⁵⁶ Ibid., 114.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 16.

believe the Medievalist must take seriously the fact that most Medieval philosophers were theologians first.

The assumption on which this whole thesis turns is that the cognitive function attributed to *divine* illumination is always *theologically* determined. On the basis of this assumption, I also assume that any Medieval thinker's definition of illumination follows logically, albeit through a series of steps, from his concept of the Triune nature of God. To identify what any thinker means when he speaks of illumination, consequently, one must first evaluate how the doctrine of the Trinity affects his explanation of the created order and above all the human mind as images of God. In the second place, one must identify the way the doctrine of the *imago dei* delimits the nature of the work the intellect *qua* image performs.

Implicit in the account of the intellect's work is an understanding of the effects of the fall and redemption on the image as well as the cognitive process involved in re-conforming to the image that was lost at the fall; these are the issues that must subsequently be assessed. Since illumination illustrates cognition, which is, for the theologian, the cognitive process of conforming to the image of God (faith seeking understanding), the discovery as to what that process entails finally throws light on the function illumination performs in cognition.

By interpreting illumination as a function of Trinitarian theology through the steps from the theological to the philosophical outlined above, I will determine what illumination means to Augustinians by contrast to Franciscans. I will strive to identify what it does and does not mean to be an Augustinian with respect to the theory of knowledge by divine illumination. In this, I seek to dispel the confusion that still surrounds Augustine's doctrine of divine illumination as well as the circumstances related to its late thirteenth-century abandonment in the Franciscan circle that the tendency to take Medieval philosophical arguments at face value has perpetuated.

Having determined to take this approach, I devote a large percentage of the chapters on my principal subjects—Augustine, Anselm, and Bonaventure—to an investigation of the theological and philosophical views that underpin these thinkers'

views on illumination. Only at the end of chapters do I comparatively briefly treat illumination itself.

While my method of interpreting the principal subjects diverges widely from the one employed by those that turn immediately to texts on illumination, there are concrete reasons for employing it. The main reason is that the meaning of illumination as any Medieval thinker conceives it is best determined by attending to the theological factors that lend his philosophical arguments on knowledge their significance. With this approach, one may identify discontinuity amongst accounts of knowledge, even ones that are articulated in the same forms of words, as well as continuity of thought where divergent methods and sources are utilized, which is precisely what I plan to do.

As regards the secondary subjects I discuss in the last two chapters of the thesis, including the Dominican Aquinas and the Franciscans Peter John Olivi, Henry of Ghent, and John Duns Scotus, I do admittedly bypass the preliminary theological inquiry and directly proceed to discuss these figures' views on knowledge and illumination. I justify this move on the grounds that the theological allegiances of Aquinas, Olivi, Ghent, and Scotus are well known. While the first adheres to an Augustinian theology, the last three maintain the Franciscan theological perspective they inherited from Bonaventure.

The preparatory studies I undertake in the chapters on Augustine, Anselm, and Bonaventure might have been unnecessary if contemporary scholars generally worked from the theological perspective that lays bare the meaning of Medieval illumination accounts, or if there was a fully developed body of secondary literature, which instructed how to read Medieval primary texts through the theological lens that exposes Medieval philosophical perspectives and allegiances. Because current scholars do not tend to assume a theological outlook, however, and because the requisite body of secondary literature is still developing or barely exists, in the case of Franciscans like Bonaventure, whose philosophical thought is still conflated with Augustine's by Medieval historians despite vast theological differences, the preliminary inquiries, which focus heavily on the exposition of primary texts, are indeed essential to the task of understanding the accounts of knowledge and

illumination under consideration here and the phenomenon of illumination's thirteenth-century decline.

Although I must broadly outline the theological thought of Augustine, Anselm, and Bonaventure for the sake of identifying their views on illumination and the cause of the account's late Medieval decline, my intention is not to give a comprehensive re-reading of the writings of any figure whose work I evaluate. I openly acknowledge that I leave much to be elaborated by other scholars, and in the case of Augustine and Aquinas especially, all my arguments rest on a foundation that has been laid by scholars who have come before me. In this context, my goal is only to sketch what I must sketch if I am to address the question as to what it does and does not mean to be an Augustinian with respect to divine illumination theory, where that question was itself engendered by the primary question why late Medieval Franciscans who pledged allegiance to Augustine eventually abandoned his account of knowledge.

In the first chapter on Augustine, I address the question as to what it means to be an Augustinian on illumination in the most direct way. As I have noted, contemporary interpreters tend to read Augustine's early works on illumination, especially *De magistro*, at philosophical face value and without much regard for relevant theological works of his maturity, most importantly, *De Trinitate*. I explain why this is the case and argue that early writings on illumination should be retrospectively read in their later stated theological context.

Starting with the Trinitarian doctrine Augustine explains in the first half of *De Trinitate*, I elaborate that context, supplementing my study with references to the simultaneously composed treatise *De Genesi ad litteram*. Next, I explain what Augustine states it means that the created order, above all the human mind, is made in the image of the Trinity. I describe how he understands the effects of the fall on the intellect. Returning to the second half of *De Trinitate*, I show how the redemptive work of the Incarnate Son enacts the possibility of re-conforming to the lost image of God, and subsequently explain what that process entails. The section on this topic elucidates how the seven 'psychological analogies' Augustine presents in the second half of his treatise outline the cognitive process involved in conforming

the image of Christ. The discussion of them therefore throws the part illumination plays in cognition into relief. The status of illumination, the study of the theory's theological context reveals, is an intrinsic rather than an extrinsic one, contrary to what is commonly assumed.

Here I might mention that illumination has only been described as an extrinsic force in late Medieval and modern times, that is, since Bonaventure interpreted the theory extrinsically and assigned his views to Augustine. Reformation thinkers like John Calvin, who wanted to stress the total depravity of the human intellect apart from grace, adopted and advanced the extrinsic interpretation of illumination and 'grace' more generally, projecting their views onto Augustine, such that those views have been generally presupposed ever since.⁵⁸

The attentive study of Augustine's own words on the matter reveals that the grace of illumination is not what his late Medieval and modern readers have needed it to be in order for their own opinions to carry weight. It is something intrinsic rather than extrinsic. The charges normally directed at Augustinian illumination extrinsically interpreted do not therefore obtain.

As the study of *De Trinitate* throws the function of illumination into relief, so the effort to interpret illumination in its theological context also highlights what is happening in the controversial treatise *De Trinitate*. In this treatise, it would appear that Augustine invents a genre of theological literature designed to help intellectually gifted readers harness their whole minds and lives for the understanding and advancement of the Christian faith, a project he anticipated in the philosophical dialogues he composed shortly after his conversion.⁵⁹ The treatise, in other words, is

⁵⁸ See B.B. Warfield's *Calvin and Augustine* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1954); A. N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (T & T Clark: Edinburgh, 1999).

⁵⁹ In her book titled *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Ellen T. Charry argues that Christian doctrine had a pastoral or 'virtue-producing' (aretegenic) function for many Patristic and Medieval theologians, including Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. She acknowledges that the doctrinal treatises of such figures were often composed for a pedagogical purpose, with intellectually gifted Christian readers in mind, to help those readers become wise. This outlook on Patristic and Medieval writings enables Charry to see through common misperceptions about their texts of Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, among others, and to address misguided criticisms, which have been made because of failures to recognize the pastoral purpose the works in question. Building on Charry's argument, I go so far as to designate a specifically Augustinian genre of theological-pedagogical literature. I locate Augustine's *De*

a ‘progressive enquiry’⁶⁰ designed to bring the reader from the beginning to the end of the process of conforming to the image of Christ. Only when its sections are divided and read outside of this context do the charges sometimes associated with it apply.

In the first part of *De Trinitate*, Augustine delineates the doctrine of the Triune God the Person of Christ—the image of the Trinity—revealed, even as He revealed that all persons were made to reflect that image. In the second half, he shows how to re-learn to constantly reflect that image that was lost at the fall and consequently imitate Christ, who glorified the Father in all He did. Where the second half makes it possible to reason in the light of faith in the Triune God, the first half enables the reader who reasons in faith to give an account of how and why it is possible to do so, that is, to explain the Christian doctrine of a Triune, Incarnate God, and respond to challenges posed to it.

While the first part teaches how to directly interpret the doctrine of the Trinity that Christ—and Scripture—makes known, the second half instructs how to interpret Scripture indirectly and therefore imitate Christ by means of efforts to render thoughts and actions consistent with the professed belief in the Triune God as the Highest Good, until the Father is glorified in all that pours forth from the human spirit, as was the case with Christ. The two halves form a progressive and interdependent line of inquiry designed to reform the reader in the image of the Trinity in preparation for the ultimate vision of the Trinity. The process of reformation is a process of learning to regard reality in the light of faith in God in order to ready the mind to see the Light itself.

Anselm is often described as the chief proponent of the Augustinian tradition in the early Middle Ages. The inquiry into Anselm’s views on the Trinity, the image of God, the fall, redemption, the process of conforming to God’s image, and finally, illumination, confirms this belief. The argument in the second chapter turns on the contention that Anselm’s *Monologion* and *Proslogion* fulfill much the same purpose

Trinitate, Anselm’s *Monologion* and *Proslogion* as well as Aquinas’ *ST* in this genre of works designed to facilitate the efforts of erudite Christian readers to conform to the image of Christ.

⁶⁰ Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s ‘De Trinitate’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2-3.

as the two halves of Augustine's *De Trinitate*, albeit in forms of argumentation relevant in the eleventh century intellectual context.

In the first treatise, Anselm delineates his obviously Augustinian doctrine of the Trinity, creation, and the *imago dei*. In the latter, where he presents his famous 'ontological' argument, he provides his reader with a resource for conforming to the image of the Trinity, as Augustine had done with his psychological analogies. This 'resource' is one Anselm claims he received in a moment of illumination and formulated to help those seeking more illumination. By reading Anselm's treatises in relation to Augustine's *De Trinitate*, and thus as a work that falls in the same genre, as the author instructs his readers to do, I challenge the idea that Anselm's argument proves the existence of God per se and redefine it as a formula for conforming to the *imago dei*, for thereby becoming a 'living' argument for the existence of God. Although I highlight the ways in which Anselm's methods differ from Augustine's for the sake of relevance in a new context, I stress that he remains an Augustinian with respect to his understanding of illumination inasmuch as he does *as* Augustine does—constructing a theory of knowledge on Augustinian theological assumptions—even if he does not do exactly *what* Augustine does, articulating his theory in the same forms of philosophical argumentation.

In the third chapter of the thesis, I show how divine illumination theory passed from the hands of the 'classic' Augustinians of the early Medieval period into the hands of thirteenth-century Dominican and especially Franciscan thinkers. The three most important points I discuss in this context are the development of scholastic methodology, the translation movements of the twelfth and early thirteenth-centuries, and the circumstances surrounding the founding of the Franciscan order, including the reasons why as well as the ways Franciscans appropriated newly translated resources upon their arrival in the university setting. In that context, I explain, the first Franciscan scholars adopted much of the theology of the twelfth-century mystic Richard of St. Victor and the philosophy of the Arab scholar Avicenna, which was consistent with the founding principles of their order, and they articulated their novel ideas in the terms of Augustine and Anselm in order to ground them on the authority of authorities.

Although Bonaventure acknowledges a great theological debt to Richard of St. Victor, he never mentions Avicenna in his writings. This is largely due to the fact that some of Avicenna's ideas had been condemned by the time the second generation of Franciscan scholars began working. If one is prepared to identify the contours of Victorine theology and Avicennian philosophy, however, one can identify them in Bonaventure's thought. Although it is widely acknowledged that Bonaventure departs from the Augustinian tradition in the matter of Trinitarian doctrine, scholars continue to affirm, virtually without exception, that the Seraphic Doctor is a philosophical Augustinian. They do this on the basis of the fact that he invokes so much of the traditional Augustinian terminology, including illumination, as well as Anselm's argument, which he re-defines as per Avicenna as an *a priori* proof for the existence of God.

The fact that Bonaventure speaks the language of Augustine masks the fact that he endows traditional terms and arguments with meanings that preclude Augustine's. His manoeuvres were ones that newly developed scholastic methods afforded the opportunity and the freedom to make, just as much as those methods enabled scholars like Aquinas to bolster traditional Augustinian perspectives in novel and creative ways. Although Bonaventure departs from Augustine on Augustine's own authority, a scholarly habit of taking philosophical arguments at face value has prevented this from being adequately emphasized in the past.

In the fourth chapter, I try to make it obvious that Bonaventure diverges from the traditional Augustinian thought as I show how he derives his extrinsic understanding of illumination from his Trinitarian doctrine through the usual series of steps. While doing this, I demonstrate that the Seraphic Doctor codified a theory of knowledge, and thus an understanding of what is involved in conforming to God's image, that is incompatible with Augustine's. Although he is typically heralded as the last and best champion on the earlier Medieval Augustinian tradition, I contend that he is one of the first and certainly the foremost promulgator of classic Franciscan philosophical thought.

While Bonaventure employed Augustine's terms and assigned them new meanings, his Dominican contemporary Thomas Aquinas was drawing on all sorts of

intellectual resources to convey the sense of Augustine's views on knowledge and illumination in new ways. The main point of the chapter on Aquinas is to throw the non-Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought into sharper relief by highlighting how it would in fact look to do as Augustine did in the thirteenth-century with respect to the theory of knowledge by illumination.

Ironically, it is Aquinas who has often been said to abandon Augustinian illumination and Anselm's argument in favour of an Aristotelian theory of knowledge by abstraction. In the fifth chapter, I show that he only rejects the Franciscan interpretations of these accounts even while he espouses and advances the Augustinian views in new and contextually relevant forms. Although the limited scope of this inquiry prevents me from elaborating on Aquinas' rendering of Augustine's doctrines of the Trinity and the *imago dei*, I stress that the Augustinian character of his thought on these issues is generally acknowledged.

On such grounds, I argue that Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* falls within the Augustinian genre of theological-pedagogical literature and serves much the same purpose as *De Trinitate* and *Monologion-Proslogion*. It is a continuous line of inquiry designed to reform the intellectually gifted reader in God's image. Consequently, there is an affinity of purpose between Augustine's psychological analogies, Anselm's argument, and Aquinas' five ways. All are formulae for conforming to the image of God. All are designed to fuel an increase in divine illumination, which Aquinas, like Augustine and Anselm, understands as an intrinsic force. Attention to the theological factors at play in illumination accounts thus reveals that the reverse of the received view is true: it is Aquinas rather than Bonaventure who is the thirteenth-century proponent of traditional Augustinian thought.

In the last chapter, I turn to explain why late thirteenth-century Franciscans abandoned the illumination account. My study focuses on Peter John Olivi, the first Franciscan to note the problems inherent in the 'extrinsic' account of Bonaventure; Henry of Ghent, the one who attempted to recast the account so that it could evade the problems; and John Duns Scotus, who pronounced Henry's attempts inadequate and rejected illumination theory once and for all. The basic problem all three saw

was that illumination, extrinsically defined, problematically interfered in the natural operations of reason, as Bonaventure had defined them.

While the Seraphic Doctor had welcomed this interference, which to his mind affirmed the possibility of intellectual intimacy with God like that which Francis enjoyed, his successors discerned the philosophical inconsistency in positing it and felt constrained to reduce and eventually eliminate it. When they did so, I emphasize that they did not eliminate illumination as Augustinians but as Franciscans understood it. Although Duns Scotus and those that prepared the way for him rejected illumination, moreover, they only did so in the effort to carry Franciscan assumptions about the nature of knowledge to their logical conclusions and eradicate inconsistencies. Their goal was not to undermine Augustinian or even Franciscan philosophical principles, but to promote Franciscan ones.

In concluding my study, I reiterate the importance of interpreting philosophical terms and arguments with a view to the theological assumptions that impart meaning. This approach to interpreting illumination theory not only highlights the contours of Augustine's intrinsic—*not* extrinsic—illumination account but also exposes where there is and is not continuity with Augustine in the later Middle Ages. Although Bonaventure is typically hailed the thirteenth-century proponent of Augustinianism, this study has shown that he actually introduced a new Avicennian-Franciscan account of knowledge under the name of Augustine even while Thomas Aquinas advances the Augustinian tradition through his use of sources besides, though not excluding, Augustine. The thought of Aquinas confirms that Augustinian and Aristotelian traditions were not opposed to one another in the thirteenth century, as is often supposed by Medievalists who take philosophical arguments at face value, but that the two are in fact highly compatible, even if the *Franciscan* Augustine and Aristotle are less conducive systems of thought.

Such research findings confirm that it is not enough to take the philosophical terms and metaphors Medieval thinkers invoked into consideration in the effort to identify their scholarly positions and allegiances. Instead, it is essential to attend to the theological factors that motivated the use of language and that lent significance to it. In short, it is necessary to inquire into late Medieval thought and intellectual

phenomena with the perspective of a late Medieval thinker, that is, a perspective that is theological.

I. AUGUSTINE

(354 – 430)

Introduction

Scholarly interpreters of illumination theory tend to focus on works Augustine composed shortly after his conversion in 386, such as *Soliloquia* and above all *De magistro*. When they consult later works, it is normally for supplementary references to illumination rather than for theological context. If neglecting to consider *divine* illumination theory in that context complicates the effort to interpret its function, one may wonder why the scholarly habit of taking arguments for illumination at face value has not been challenged in the past.

There are a number of likely reasons why an alternative approach to interpreting illumination has not been suggested. In the first place, it is human nature to dwell on appearances rather than to attend from them to that which they signify. It is also a human tendency to project one's own views onto authorities for the sake of advancing a polemical or intellectual agenda, as has been done in the case of Augustine's illumination theory.

On a more scholarly level, it is important to note that the treatise in which Augustine provides the theological context most pertinent to the interpretation of illumination, *De Trinitate*, has been criticized on the basis of misapprehensions for quite some time. The account of relevant sections of *De Trinitate* I offer in this chapter presupposes the unity and coherence of the work, which scholars in the fairly recent past have called into question. Only briefly do I pause to mention and address the accusations that have been levelled against Augustinian theology, which apply to Augustinian theologians like Anselm and Aquinas more generally.

My treatment of these issues is limited because I assume knowledge of the comprehensive work other scholars have done in these regards. While Rowan Williams, Lewis Ayres, and Michel René Barnes have addressed the problems typically associated with the Trinitarian theology Augustine presents in the first half of *De Trinitate*, as well as his theological anthropology, Luigi Gioia has recently produced a study which incorporates the research findings of the aforementioned in

giving an analytical exposition of the whole treatise that traces the progression of its inquiry and underlines its coherence.⁶¹ Building on the foundation laid by these scholars, I aim to focus in on the the contours of the theory of human cognition that can be derived from *De Trinitate*, with a view to throwing the operation of illumination in cognition into relief. If such a project has not been undertaken in the past, it is likely due to the fact that the groundwork in the scholarship on Augustine's theology needed to be laid first. Yet this has now been done.

In a recent book, Carol Harrison discusses another aspect of the situation in Augustinian studies, which has encouraged readings of Augustine's early writings, including those on illumination, without reference to the theological context he later elucidates in works like *De Trinitate*.⁶² As she explains, scholars have taken *Confessiones* as the point of departure for the study of Augustine for over a century. Augustine began to compose this work in 396, ten years after his conversion and in the same year he became Bishop of Hippo. Researchers usually begin with *Confessiones*, Harrison relates, because they virtually universally assume that Augustine underwent an intellectual revolution in the early 390's as a result of reading the Apostle Paul. In commentaries on Paul's writings dating from this decade, Augustine works out his mature theology of original sin, the Fall, grace, free will, and so forth. Because elaborate versions of these doctrines are absent in the earlier works, the most well known of which include the four dialogues Augustine composed at Cassiciacum (*Contra academicos*, *De beata vita*, *De ordine*, and *Soliloquia*) and *De magistro*, many scholars see 396 rather than 386 as the real turning point in the bishop's thought.

In his immensely influential biography of Augustine, Harrison notes, Peter Brown perpetuated this notion that there are 'two Augustines': the Augustine of the early works, a young devotee of Christian philosophy, and the Augustine of 396, a

⁶¹ See the footnotes in the sections of this chapter on 'Trinity' and 'Criticisms of the Psychological Analogies'. Also see my article titled, "Knowledge by Illumination: The Grandeur of Reason According to Augustine," in *The Grandeur of Reason* (London: SCM, 2009).

⁶² Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

mature and devout clergyman.⁶³ Following the publication of Brown's book in 1967, the 'two Augustines' theory became canonical in the scholarship. As a result, the author of the early works came to be considered as "no more and no less than a philosopher."⁶⁴ Because Augustine supposedly remained under the spell of Neo-Platonism during the first decade of his Christian life, his first writings are said to be, "of doubtful significance for appreciating his mature thought."⁶⁵ On Harrison's view, the 'two Augustines' thesis is simply a revised version of the old and long since dispatched idea that Augustine was converted to Neo-Platonism rather than Christianity in 386.⁶⁶ However, she thinks the 'two Augustines' theory questions "the nature and importance of his conversion in 386 in a manner just as radical as those who held that Augustine was initially converted to Neo-Platonism."⁶⁷

In the second edition of his biography, which was published in 2000, Peter Brown admits that the 'two Augustines' thesis was more of a theoretical experiment than a statement of fact.⁶⁸ By this time, however, his thesis had already earned universal acclaim.⁶⁹ In the effort to counteract the scholarly effects of the wide acceptance of that thesis, Harrison contends that the real revolution in Augustine's thought happened in 386. Recently, Platonism had freed him from a false Manichean concept of God as "an infinitely diffused material substance,"⁷⁰ and had instilled in him a sense of God's transcendence and of the reliance of all reality upon Him. By reading the books of the Platonists, Augustine was prepared to realize at his conversion that faith in the Triune, Incarnate God fulfils the Platonic vision. When Augustine went on to construct his theology, he did so on a foundation that was laid in the Garden of Milan. Harrison's goal is to demonstrate that Augustine's mature understanding of sin, grace, free will, and so on, is inchoately present in his early

⁶³ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967; 2nd ed. 2000).

⁶⁴ Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁰ Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 366. Also see Augustine, *Confessiones*, 7.10.16, ff.

works, and thus to highlight the continuity between the early and late theological thought of St. Augustine.

In this chapter, my argument also turns on the assumption that there is continuity in Augustine's thought. My goal is to show that the later works contain an account of the theological context and mechanics of illumination that throws light on the logic of the theory as Augustine presents it in the early works. Around the time of his conversion, it would seem that Augustine came to see that faith in Christ enacts the Platonic theory of knowledge by illumination, the contours of which had become clear to him through the prior reading of Platonist works. Although he had yet to explain for the sake of his readers how the directly proportional relationship between faith in Christ and illumination works, Augustine gestures in the early works towards the distinctly Christian conception of illumination he already has in mind.

In his *Retractationes*, Augustine testifies that this is truly the case. In the entry on *De magistro*, for instance, he expresses satisfaction with the work and makes no amendments to it.⁷¹ In the retraction on *Soliloquia*, he affirms that what he wrote about illumination in this work is consistent with what he wrote about it in *De Trinitate*.⁷² In the entry on *De Trinitate* itself, the bishop states that he wrote the work for the audience he had addressed in his earlier philosophical dialogues, which was inclusive of all believers who longed to understand how their faith pertains to the rigorous intellectual pursuits they were gifted to undertake.⁷³ Augustine's erudite Christian readers were apparently so eager to know his views on this issue that they began to circulate sections of his manuscript before he had approved its publication. Ultimately, they convinced him to release the work in entirety before he had polished it to his satisfaction.

If Augustine's divine illumination theory has not been interpreted in its proper, though later formulated, theological context as his retractions suggest is appropriate to do, it must be at least partially due to the reason Harrison cites, namely, that the 'two Augustines' theory has prompted scholars to regard works from the two phases of his career in separation. For the contemporary reader, for

⁷¹ See *Retractationes* (CCL 57, 36).

⁷² *Ibid.* (CCL 57, 13-15).

whom a theory of knowledge by illumination is a foreign concept, however, a reading of the account in its proper context is the key to grasping its purpose and plausibility.

In this chapter, I explain one way of giving such a theologically contextualized reading. I begin my study by offering an account of the Trinitarian doctrine Augustine delineates in the first half of *De Trinitate*. I discuss the implications the doctrine has for Augustine's account of the created order and the human being as an image of God, which can be found in the complementary treatise, *De Genesi ad litteram*. In this context, I also explain how Augustine envisions the nature of the cognitive work the mind performs as the *imago dei*.

Subsequently, I explain the impact of the fall upon the image, as Augustine describes it in *De Genesi*, as well as the effect of redemption as he describes it in *De Trinitate*. Turning to the latter half of *De Trinitate*, I focus on demonstrating how he illustrates the cognitive process of conforming to the lost image, with the help of his seven psychological analogies. On the basis of the discovery as to how Augustine understands cognition, I finally strive to make sense of the arguments for the role of illumination in human knowing, which Augustine presents in *De magistro* and *Soliloquia*.

Trinity

One point Augustine makes unmistakably clear in *De Trinitate* is that the divine nature is radically distinct from the nature of any created being.⁷³ By contrast to creatures, God is not corporeal and thus He is not visible. He is not comprised of parts and therefore He is not mutable. Rather, He is simple. He is one in essence and in action. Since accidents only apply to composite, changeable beings, He has no properties. Instead, He is what He has, and He has all things eternally. He is always all that it is to be Being Itself.

In the first half of *De Trinitate* where the doctrine of the Trinity is unfurled, Augustine acknowledges that some find the teaching on divine simplicity troubling,

⁷³ Ibid., (CCL 57, 101-2).

⁷⁴ Augustine, *trin.* 1.1.3 (CCL 50, 30-1); 2.8.14 (CCL 50, 98-9); 5.1.1 (CCL 50, 206).

given that God is also described as Triune. God the Father is the unbegotten beginning from which the Son proceeds.⁷⁵ The Son, who is generated by the Father, does nothing of His own accord but simply expresses what He receives from the Father.⁷⁶ The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son and thus proceeds from both Persons.⁷⁷

Although the Father, Son, and Spirit can be distinguished in these ways, Augustine insists that, they are not three Gods, but one God.⁷⁸ He then explains how one can maintain that God works indivisibly, even though the Father, Son, and Spirit, are appropriated different functions.⁷⁹ To do this, he introduces the distinction between ‘substance’ (*substantia*) and ‘relation’ (*relativus*).⁸⁰ Whatever is spoken of the substance of God, such as that He is good or that He acts in a certain way can be predicated of all three Persons.⁸¹ Whatever is predicated relatively is said of one Person in particular.⁸²

On Augustine’s reasoning, the involvement of three Persons in different modes of relation does not undermine but enact the simplicity of the divine being and divine action. When the Son proceeds from the Father, He receives and manifests the Spirit of God.⁸³ His Spirit thus gestures back towards the Father, returning to Him what He gave through the Son, binding Father and Son together. While it is true that the Father who sends takes priority over the ones He sends, who glorify their sender, no inferiority within the Godhead is implied, as those of Arian persuasion believe, because the glory of the Father simply *is* the work of the Son and His Spirit. Each Person contributes in His own way to establishing that God’s nature is to enable another in the effort to reinforce the glory of God, and it is in virtue of the fact that the three Persons subsist in different relations that there is one divine Being whose glory is eternally reinforced.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ Ibid., 5.13.14 (CCL 50, 221).

⁷⁶ Ibid., 2.1.2 (CCL 50, 81-2).

⁷⁷ Ibid., 5.14.15 (CCL 50, 222-3).

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1.4.7 (CCL 50, 35).

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1.5.8 (CCL 50, 36-7).

⁸⁰ Ibid., 5.5.6 (CCL 50, 210).

⁸¹ Ibid., 5.8.9 (CCL 50, 215-6).

⁸² Ibid., 5.11.12 (CCL 50, 219).

⁸³ Ibid., 2.3.5 (CCL 50, 85-6).

⁸⁴ Ibid., 6.5.7 (CCL 50, 235-6).

The Trinitarian theology outlined above was attacked on numerous counts in an earlier generation of scholars. More recently, however, Ayres, Barnes, Gioia, and Williams have managed to reverse this critical trend by calling attention to the actual content and context of *De Trinitate*, which Augustine's critics tended to overlook.⁸⁵

As Michel René Barnes has explained, the universal acceptance of Théodore De Régnon's account of the history of Trinitarian theology has been the main source of the problems for Augustine.⁸⁶ For De Régnon, "Western Trinitarian theology begins with divine unity (i.e. the essence) while Eastern Trinitarian theology begins with divine diversity (i.e. the Persons)."⁸⁷ In modern times, Lewis Ayres writes, Augustine has been "treated as the source and exemplar of the distinctively Western style of Trinitarian theology...[that] highlights the supposed deficiencies of the West."⁸⁸

On Ayres' account, this is especially true of the scholar Olivier Du Roy.⁸⁹ Du Roy interprets Augustine's distinctly 'Western' emphasis on divine simplicity as an unorthodox preoccupation with Neo-Platonism. On his reading, "the substantial influence of Neo-Platonism upon Augustine's Trinitarian theology results in an overly metaphysical portrait of God, which diminishes the reality of the Trinity to the point of being a functionally modalist"⁹⁰ account of God. In that kind of account, Father, Son and Spirit are effectively interchangeable modes of being rather than unique Persons; each one could conceivably do the work of another.

Barnes and Ayres contend that Augustine's emphasis on divine simplicity is indicative of a 'pro-Nicene' as opposed to Platonist outlook on the nature of God. The authors demonstrate that the "reading of Augustine's Trinitarian theology as an event in Latin Neo-Platonism can no longer credibly serve to locate that theology

⁸⁵ See Michel René Barnes, "Rereading Augustine on the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); the chapter on Augustine in Lewis Ayres' *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, as well as Ayres' article, "The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology," in *Augustine and His Critics* (London: Routledge: 2000); Luigi Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 10-16 & 24-39; Rowan Williams, "De Trinitate" in *Augustine through the Ages* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

⁸⁶ Michel René Barnes, "Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 56:2: (1995): 237.

⁸⁷ Michel René Barnes, "Rereading Augustine on the Trinity," 152.

⁸⁸ Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 364.

⁸⁹ Refer to Olivier Du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon S. Augustin* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1966).

historically,”⁹¹ because it fails to reflect the context and “the doctrinal content of the texts it is supposed to explain.”⁹²

The two overcome the misreading of Augustine’s Trinitarian theology by situating it in its proper context. By the 380’s, Barnes writes, the Nicene Creed of 325 had been generally accepted and substantially developed in both the East and the West.⁹³ Although the Creed was originally formulated in a polemical context as a response to the Arian heresy, which denied the Son’s equality to the Father, Barnes shows that by Augustine’s time, the mark of a genuine ‘pro-Nicene’ theologian had come to be identified with a more general emphasis on the notion that “any action of any member of the Trinity is an action of the three inseparably.”⁹⁴

The doctrine of ‘inseparable operations’ is precisely what Augustine upholds by laying stress on divine simplicity. That stress on simplicity by no means undermines the distinctness of the three Persons. As Ayres points out, Augustine’s way of depicting the separate Persons in relation calls the reader to recognize their unity. “The Triune communion *is* a consubstantial and eternal unity, but there *is* nothing but the Persons.”⁹⁵ Augustine is no heterodox Platonist, consequently, but a genuine pro-Nicene Trinitarian theologian.

Creation in God’s Image

THE NATURAL ORDER

Although Augustine begins to transition from treating the Triune nature of God to explaining how He fashioned the natural order in His image in *De Trinitate* book three, his most elaborate account of God’s creation is not to be found in that treatise but in the twelve books of *De Genesi ad litteram*, and in the first six books particularly. The bishop opens his account of God’s creative work in that treatise by explaining the role each Person of the Trinity played in the creative act. Thus, the

⁹⁰ Michel René Barnes, “Rereading Augustine on the Trinity,” 145.

⁹¹ Ibid., 150.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 155.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 156.

⁹⁵ Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 380.

commentary starts with an explication of Genesis 1:3: then God said, ‘let there be light’!⁹⁶

According to Augustine, all three Persons were involved in this proclamation of light, inasmuch as the Word the Father uttered was His Son, who gave outward expression to the Spirit that is eternally expressed within the Godhead. As in the inner life of the Trinity, so in the external manifestation of the divine, all three Persons are involved.⁹⁷ Because they are, the proclamation of the Uncreated Light of God gave rise to a created light. That created light participated in the Uncreated Light from which it came and which was undiminished by and thus utterly distinct from its creation.

With that established, Augustine proceeds to consider what the created light originally was. On his reasoning, it can only have consisted in creatures that exist in a spiritual mode of being like God Himself. For Augustine, this mode is at once intellectual, inasmuch as it entails orientation towards the knowledge of God.⁹⁸ On these grounds, he concludes that the words ‘let there be light’ illumined angelic beings to participate in the vision God has of Himself.⁹⁹ God did not speak those words into time, Augustine insists, but issued his proclamation of light on the first day of creation, prior to the start of time.

On that first day, the Genesis account relates that God also separated the light from the darkness. According to Augustine, the primordial darkness was the absence of light or ‘nothingness’ that arose where there was formlessness and mutability, or all that God and spiritual beings are not. Presumably, darkness became separable from light as a result of the fall of the devil.¹⁰⁰ Although what was inherently formless could not impose form upon itself, it was naturally receptive to modification and the imposition of form.¹⁰¹ Therefore, it was from this stuff of nothing that God created the world.

⁹⁶ Augustine, *Gn. litt.* 1.2.4.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.2.6 (the Son); 1.5.10 (the Spirit); 1.6.12 (the Trinity).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.5.10.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.9.15.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.10.18 & 1.14.28; on the fall of the devil see 11.16.21.

¹⁰¹ *Idem.*, *conf.*, 13.19.28 (CCL 27, 257).

At this juncture in his argument, Augustine stresses the significance of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Because God did not fashion material reality from His own immaterial substance but only imposed His form upon matter, there is a radical difference between Creator and creatures. The doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* underscores the fact that God's creative work does not detract from His being nor make Him dependent upon what He made, even though it impacts the corporeal creatures that receive their form from Him and therefore depend on Him for their existence.¹⁰² Inasmuch as God caused matter that was 'next to nothing' to become something, so far as it was formed nothingness, God caused creatures to become images of Him who is never an image of them.¹⁰³

When God gave form to what was formless, His creatures retained both the mutability characteristic of formlessness and the immutability they derived from their form. The form or essence of the creature ensured that its parts were always structured to comprise the same kind of being suited to perform the same sorts of operations. Owing to the interplay of immutability and mutability, however, creatures were constrained to develop into their forms. The forms God imparted creatures were not actualized, in other words. Rather, they instilled in creatures the potential to gradually become the beings they were made to be. For this reason, Augustine writes that creation from nothing must be creation in time.¹⁰⁴

Augustine introduces his doctrine of 'causal', 'eternal', or 'seminal' reasons (*rationes seminales*) in order to explain how a creature grows into its form. A causal reason, he states, is simply the form the creature has the potential to actualize as it develops in the course of time.¹⁰⁵ When God created the heavens and earth at the first moment in time, He brought all the causal reasons into effect at once and in this enacted the potential existence of all things. As the creation narrative of *Ecclesiasticus* book eighteen teaches, He created all things simultaneously.¹⁰⁶ Although this is true from the perspective of Him who stands outside of time and eternally sees the potential of all things in act, the Genesis account of creation in the

¹⁰² Ibid., 12.11.11 (CCL 27, 211); 12.28.38 (CCL 27, 23-8).

¹⁰³ Ibid., 12.27.37 (CCL 27, 236-7); 13.2.2 (CCL 27, 242).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 12.8.8 (CCL 27, 220); 12.11.14 (CCL 27, 222-3). See also *Gn. litt.* 1.5.12.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 6.14.25.

course of time is also true from the standpoint of the creatures that are situated within it.¹⁰⁷

Augustine's description of the way creatures actualize the potential a causal reason instils comes in the form of his comments on *Wisdom* 11.20. This verse states that God ordered all things in virtue of measure, number, and weight (*mensura, numerus, pondus*).¹⁰⁸ On Augustine's account, 'measure' is a being's finite limit or maximum potential. 'Number' is the form or causal reason the creature has the potential to fully instantiate. Weight is the characteristic operation of the creature, through which it increases in number and approximates its measure.¹⁰⁹ Number gauges the extent to which a creature has met its measure by operating in accordance with its weight and thus mediates between measure and weight, facilitating a creature's efforts to become what it was made to be, that is, to reach its measure.

In order for beings to actualize their potential through the cooperation of measure, number, and weight, Augustine argues that there must be a Being that is always actualized. There must exist a 'Measure without measure'; a 'Number without number', "by which all things are formed, but that receives no form;"¹¹⁰ and a 'Weight without weight', to which beings are drawn, but which "is not drawn to any other."¹¹¹

Augustine affirms that the Triune God is such a Being, because the Son is the exact likeness of the Father in the Spirit, which is to say that God's number is eternally equal to an infinite measure since His weight is Himself. On Augustine's account, God *is* Measure, Number, and Weight, because the ratio of measure to number to weight never alters in Him, and His measure is all that is. For that very reason, He pre-contains and makes possible without predetermining all finite modes of measure, all increase in number, and all operation in accordance with weight. His existence allows creatures to come into existence and grow into their essences so

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 4.33.51.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 4.33.52-34.53.

¹⁰⁸ See Carol Harrison, 'Measure, Number, and Weight in Saint Augustine's Aesthetics', *Augustinianum* 28 (1998): 591-602.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 4.3.7; see also *conf.* 13.4 (CCL 27, 244).

¹¹⁰ Idem., *Gn. litt.*, 4.4.8.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

long as they exist. Although there appear to be many finite measures that increase in number by carrying weight, Augustine argues that they are all simply different manifestations of one Measure, Number, and Weight. The causal reasons are ‘eternal reasons’ inasmuch as Measure, Number, and Weight is eternal.

In giving his account of measure, number, and weight, Augustine outlines the contours of his ontology of participation. In this ontology, a creature is said to participate in the divine mode of being when it increasingly participates in its own essential mode of being through the cooperation of measure, number, and weight. As God’s simplicity is enacted by His Triune nature, so the simplicity of a creature, or the fact that it always remains the same kind of being that performs the same sort of function, despite growth and development, is sustained by the involvement of three elements. The more a being becomes itself as it performs its proper function, the more its triune structure renders its potential to image divine simplicity effectual, such that it becomes an ever better image of the Trinity.

Despite the fact that God exists in an eternal and unchangeable manner “far different from beings which are made...and cannot be spoken of in any way with human language without recourse to expression of time and space,”¹¹² Augustine confirms that ‘traces’ of Him can be detected all throughout the natural order. Even though God is not knowable in Himself, He can be known because the creatures He made are structured in a manner analogous to His. When they are seen as analogues, the study of their structure becomes an indirect study of His.

While Augustine believes all creatures participate in the divine essence through increasing participation in their own essences, he does not think they all do so at the same level. Rather, he states that, “creatures express the goodness of God “according to the appointed capacity granted to each entity according to its genus.”¹¹³ Even though all substances are naturally good, Augustine affirms that some “abide

¹¹² Ibid., 5.16.34.

¹¹³ Ibid., 4.17.29.

close to God in the graded hierarchy of being, or stand further away from Him.”¹¹⁴
Put differently, there are levels to the goodness of what God has made.

One reason Augustine thinks the account of creation in time is important is that it discloses the hierarchical order God established. In the first place, God produced vegetation or non-sentient, non-rational creatures, and called them good. He then created the animals, or sentient, non-rational creatures, and called them good. Finally, He made human beings sentient, rational creatures and called them *very good*, locating them at the top of the hierarchy of being and indicating that they have a unique role to play in the governance of the natural order.

THE HUMAN BEING

Augustine insists that God called human beings *very good* because He made them capable of identifying things as good and thus of doing as He does. After devoting the first half of *De Genesi* to the discussion of the natural order, the bishop turns in the second half to treat the creation, nature, and purpose of human beings. In the twelfth and final book, he gives his account of the three modes of cognition that enable human beings to identify the good and to ultimately attain the knowledge of the Good that is God Himself, which is the measure of humankind.

Augustine calls the first mode ‘corporeal vision’ (*ratio*). In this mode, a person passively receives empirical data through sense perception.¹¹⁵ The second mode is referred to as ‘spiritual vision’ (*intellectus*) and is otherwise known as the imagination.¹¹⁶ In spiritual vision, the mind makes a mental image (*phantasm*) of a corporeal object to determine the nature of the object, or to identify what is good in it. The bishop stresses that corporeal faculties do not generate images themselves.

¹¹⁴Idem., *conf.*, 12.28.38 (CCL 27, 237-8): *sed de nihilo dissimilitudinem informem, quae formaretur per similitudinem tuam recurrens in te unum pro captu ordinato, quantum cuique rerum in suo genere datum est, et fierent omnia bona ualde, sive maneant circa te, sive gradatim remotiore distantia per tempora et locos pulchras variations faciant aut patiantur.*

¹¹⁵Idem., *Gn. litt.* 12.7.16: *primum ergo appellemus corporale, quia per corpus percipitur et corporis sensibus exhibetur.*

¹¹⁶Ibid., *secundum spiritale*: *quidquid enim corpus non est et tamen aliquid est, iam recte spiritus dicitur et utique non est corpus, quamuis corpori similes sit, imago absentis corporis, nec ille ipse obtutus, quo cernitur.*

Rather, the formation of an image is something the spirit accomplishes, as it perceives created realities by means of the body.¹¹⁷

On Augustine's description, the imagination is the faculty that considers absent bodies, yet the bishop notes that it is possible to do this in any one of three ways. The imagination can be used simply to recall objects that have been perceived in the past, insofar as the images of objects the mind forms upon experiencing them give the objects a spiritual existence in the mind which allows the mind to retain them in the memory even when they are no longer physically present.¹¹⁸

Additionally, the imaginative faculty can be employed to "arbitrarily or fancifully fashion objects which have no real existence,"¹¹⁹ that is, to combine and multiply and vary images of things that have been perceived in order to form images of things that have not been or cannot be perceived in reality. Although the resources for human cognition are limited to what the mind passively receives by way of the senses, Augustine affirms that it is possible to exceed the limitations imposed by the corporeal faculties the act of thinking imaginatively about corporeal reality.¹²⁰

The imaginative power to utilize images of objects that have been seen for the purpose of conceptualizing ones that have not been seen is the same power that makes it possible to envision a future course of events or plan of action in the third use of the imagination Augustine mentions.¹²¹ As the bishop points out, the imagination is the faculty that enacts the possibility of human ingenuity and creativity.¹²² In his view, therefore, spiritual vision is in many respects the seat of human cognition inasmuch as the mind's methods for representing its objects are an expression of the unique interests and abilities of the human spirit itself.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 12.16.32-33 & 12.24.51.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 12.7.16.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 12.12.25: *sed cum vigilantes neque mente a sensibus corporis alienata in visione corporali sumus, discernimus ab ea visione spiritalem, qua corpora absentia imaginaliter cogitamus, sive memoriter recordantes, quae novimus et tamen sunt in ipsa spiritus cogitatione utcumque formantes sive quae omnino nusquam sunt pro arbitrio vel opinione fingentes.*

¹²⁰ Idem., *trin.*, 11.8.13 (CCL 50, 350).

¹²¹ Idem., *Gn. litt.* 12.16.33.

¹²² Idem., *trin.*, 8.4.7 (CCL 50, 275-6).

Together, corporeal and spiritual vision comprise what Augustine calls ‘lower reason’. Lower reason seeks knowledge of the natural order (*scientia*), by contrast to higher reason, which is constituted by the third mode of intellectual vision (*intelligentia*), in which the mind pursues wisdom (*sapientia*).¹²³ While the proper objects of lower reason are corporeal bodies, the proper objects of higher reason are incorporeal. In the present life, those incorporeal objects are ideas.¹²⁴ Ultimately, however, the proper object of the intellect is the idea of God. So long as lower reason comes into contact with corporeal bodies, however, the intellect cannot behold God, who is incorporeal by nature. The knowledge of the material and the immaterial, instantiations of goodness and the Good Itself, is mutually exclusive.

For this reason, Augustine argues that the proper function of the intellect in the present life is to judge what the good things the imagination represents are good for, and so govern the use of the imagination. Such is the wisdom of God that is currently attainable. In forming wise judgments, Augustine writes, the mind “analyzes and synthesizes,”¹²⁵ (*discernere vel conectere*) “distinguishes and connects,”¹²⁶ “combines and separates,”¹²⁷ what it learns, ‘seeking oneness’.¹²⁸ In determining what good things are good for, in other words, the intellect classifies them under categories. It determines the form creatures exhibit, compares creatures with different forms and contrasts creatures with the same form on the basis of differences in measure and weight. As human beings operate in this categorizing mode of cognition, they mimic the simplifying cognitive mode of the Father who thinks Himself, through the Son, in the Spirit. The intellectual faculty through which they engage in such ‘abstractive’ acts of reasoning, Augustine writes, “has been

¹²³ Idem., *Gn. litt.* 7.7.16.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 12.7.16: *tertium vero intellectuale ab intellectu, quia mentale a mente ipsa vocabuli novitate nimis absurdum est ut dicamus.*

¹²⁵ Idem., *De ordine* 2.18.48 (CCL 29, 133), trans. Robert P. Russell (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

¹²⁶ Ibid., 2.11.30 (CCL 29, 124-5): *ratio est mentis motio ea, quae discuntur, distinguendi et conectendi potens.*

¹²⁷ Idem., *trin.*, 11.8.15 (CCL 50, 352): *quae autem conciliat ista atque conjungit, ipsa etiam disiungit ac separate, id est voluntas.*

¹²⁸ Idem., *ord.*, 1.2.3 (CCL 29, 90): *sic animus a se ipse fusus immensitate quadam diverberatur et vera mendicitate conteritur, cum eum natura sua cogit ubique unum quaerere et multitudo invenire non sinit.*

impressed upon human nature as if it were a law.”¹²⁹ The ‘law’ whereby the intellect discerns unity in diversity is ultimately the unity of God; it is intrinsic to human nature, and it renders human beings in the image of God.

Augustine frequently affirms that human beings know whatever they know in the rules (*regulae*) of judgment or eternal reasons that are above the human mind, in the mind of God.¹³⁰ More than anything else, these references have led interpreters of Augustine to conclude that God impresses ideas upon human minds that either impose the very content of cognition or regulate the process of concept formation, or to conclude that God’s assistance in human cognitive efforts is extrinsic and that something supernatural must be added to the natural power of reason in order for reason to perform its proper function.

The passages highlighted above suggest that Augustine thinks the laws according to which the mind judges reduce to one law, namely, the intellect’s intrinsic ability to cognize in a unifying manner. They therefore lead the reader to envisage a rather different picture of the relationship between divine and human cognitive action. Far from intimating that God interferes with the use of the intellectual power, Augustine seems to indicate that God’s primary causality enacts the ability of human beings to act as secondary causes in their own created sphere.

Some scholars have referred to the model of divine causality that Augustine and many other early Medieval thinkers presuppose as the *influentia* model, in which the human intellectual powers are literally said to ‘flow in’ from the divine power that posits what He creates as an influence in its own right.¹³¹ On this model, human acts are accredited to God, not because God compels or performs them in any way

¹²⁹ Idem., *trin.*, 8.4.7 (CCL 50, 275-6): *habemus enim quasi regulariter infixam naturae humanae notitiam secundum quam quidquid tale aspicimus statim hominem esse cognoscimus vel hominis formam.*

¹³⁰ Ibid., 9.6.9-20 (CCL 50, 301): *sed intuemur inviolabilem veritatem ex qua perfecte quantum possumus definiamus non quails sit uniuscuiusque hominis mens, sed quails esse sempiternis rationibus debeat*; 12.2.2 (CCL 50, 356-7): *sed sublimioris rationis est judicare de istis corporalibus secundum rationes incorporales et sempiternas quae nisi supra mentem humanam essent, incommutabiles profecto non essent, atque his nisi subjungeretur aliquid nostrum, non secundum eas possemus de corporalibus judicare. Judicamus autem de corporalibus ex ratione dimensionum atque figurarum quam incommutabiliter manere mens novit.*

¹³¹ See John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 89, ff. Milbank draws on an article by Jacob Schmutz. “*La doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure* (13-17 siècles),” *Revue Thomiste* 101 (2001): 217-64; see especially 221-29.

that undermines the integrity of the intellect, but because the very ability to be a secondary cause comes from Him.

From this perspective, the mind remains free to formulate ideas of its own accord. Inevitably, these ideas are subject to evolution and are nothing like the immutable knowledge of God for that very reason. Inasmuch as God eternally knows all things in Himself, however, He foreknows all knowledge of goodness a mutable mind might achieve. Although Augustine admittedly affirms that human beings perform their acts of knowing in the light of God's eternal types, he does not say this on the assumption that God imposes ideas but on the basis of the belief that human minds come to know what God always knows as they form their own judgments in view of the knowledge that He is the source of all that is good, which is to see things as they really are.

Doing what God wants one to do by adhering to the Good in this way is the very definition of exercising the freedom to know, in Augustine's opinion.¹³² While the incorporeal Good cannot be reduced to any one corporeal good, all corporeal goods have something in common with the incorporeal one. Evaluating corporeal goods in view of the fact that they come from an all-inclusive and invisible Good therefore liberates the intellect to find the good in all things and thus find happiness through all things. In willing the Common Good, which is what God wants human beings to will, consequently, they will their own good.¹³³ They do not abandon but obtain and enjoy the freedom and happiness they are born to desire.¹³⁴ They begin to participate already in an eternal life that consists in knowing the Goodness of God.

To gaze on the Goodness of God Himself is the measure of humankind, as Augustine understands it. Even though human beings cannot reach their intellectual measure in the present life, Augustine affirms that they approach it as they acquire knowledge of the good, or increase in number, under the impetus of the love of God, which is the weight of humankind.¹³⁵ Measure, number, and weight cooperate to increase a person's level of participation in the divine essence, in other words, as the

¹³² Augustine, *Gn. litt.*, 8.12.25; 8.14.31.

¹³³ Idem., *trin.*, 12.9.14 (CCL 50, 350-1).

¹³⁴ Idem., *Gn. litt.*, vol. 2, 8.25.46.

¹³⁵ Idem., *conf.*, 13.4 (CCL 27, 244): "My weight is my love..."

intellect accumulates *knowledge* in the *love* of God. Indeed, the intellect, its knowledge, and its love are the measure, number, and weight, respectively, of the human being.

As human persons employ the God-given power to identify His Goodness in the goods He has made, one thing in diverse things, they order various goods according to the type and level of goodness they manifest and ‘preserve justice’ or proper order among them. The view of all things in their just order, Augustine writes, is the divine perspective on the goodness of the natural order through which the intellect participates in God’s knowledge of His own Goodness.¹³⁶ It is the wise outlook that is needed in order to exercise dominion over creation and thus do what God wanted human beings to do, which is to call His creation good, as He does.¹³⁷ By maintaining such a sound perspective on reality, human beings reflect the *imago dei* and prepare to encounter the Reality.¹³⁸

At the end of *De Genesi*, Augustine explains how the vision of temporal goods readies the mind to gaze upon the eternal Good. Although he admits that the ‘matter of thought’ comes into the mind from without, he observes that, “the intellect completes its operation within, and nothing in it lies outside the nature of the mind itself.”¹³⁹ On those grounds, he infers that the final mode of vision need not pass away, even when the first two modes of vision that operate on corporeal bodies do. When the corporeal order is replaced with an incorporeal one, Augustine writes, the intellect will go on operating for eternity on spiritual realities in a manner continuous with the way it worked with respect to corporeal bodies in time.¹⁴⁰ In paradise, the three modes of vision will be perfected.¹⁴¹

Fall

There is a double edge to Augustine’s *influentia* model of divine causality. While God willed that human beings constantly adhere to the incorporeal Good

¹³⁶ Idem., *trin.*, 14.12.15 (CCL 50, 443).

¹³⁷ Idem., *Gn. litt.*, vol. 1, 3.20.30.

¹³⁸ Ibid., vol. 2, 12.26.54 & 12.28.56.

¹³⁹ Idem., *trin.*, 11.7.12 (CCL 50, 349).

¹⁴⁰ Idem., *Gn. litt.*, vol. 2, 12.35.68.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 12.36.69.

however they willed to do this, He also gave them the faculties to grasp corporeal realities.¹⁴² Because they possess the latter set of faculties, human beings are mutable. They do not always act in the same way. In the original order of creation, there was nothing detrimental about human mutability, for this was what enabled human beings to be creative and to grow in the knowledge of the Good. Even so, it was owing to the interplay of the mutable with the immutable in human nature that the first man and woman could think to deviate from the Good.

A turn away from the Common Good as Augustine explains it is a turn towards a private good, which is no good at all, since the individual good *is* the Common Good.¹⁴³ To make that turn is to forfeit the knowledge of God as Highest Good and His image along with it. By losing sight of the spiritual Being of God, the intellect forgets itself as a spiritual being designed to know Him. In forgetting its purpose, it also forgets the purpose of all the things it knows, which is to lead it towards the knowledge of the Good and makes the prideful mistake of regarding itself and its desires as Highest Goods.

This inordinate perception of the self, which is accompanied by an inordinate self-love, incapacitates the intellect for the purposes of governing the operations of the imagination. It causes the intellect to lose its proper—divine—perspective on reality. In the fallen context, the intellect is prone to take the finite goods represented by the imagination as ultimate goods.¹⁴⁴ The unsupervised imagination leads the intellect to become “so absorbed in material forms that it judges them to be the only ones and refers all its functions towards those ends.”¹⁴⁵ The unchecked imagination thus compels the mind to invent its own idea of what constitutes the happy life, which almost always consists in temporal attainments.¹⁴⁶

When the intellect overestimates the goodness of finite goods in this manner, the mind ceases to know them as they really are, namely, as goods that contribute to but do not constitute the incorporeal Good. Ironically, the loss of perspective on what is really good makes it difficult if not impossible to see the good at all,

¹⁴² Ibid., 8.14.31.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 11.5.8 & 11.15.19.

¹⁴⁴ Idem., *trin.*, 10.6.8-7.9 (CCL 50, 321-2); 10.8.11 (CCL 50, 324-5).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 12.9.14.

particularly in a fallen world, where the good is hard to find in many circumstances, and goods that are found are fleeting. Since the mind that cannot see the good or hope to obtain it can never be happy, the fallen tendency to pursue the happy life one has defined for oneself is even more ironically bound to become the cause of dissatisfaction with one's own life. In committing themselves to doing anything in order to grasp and retain the happy life as they have defined it, Augustine observes that fallen human beings become the cause of their own unhappiness.¹⁴⁷ In the same instance, they became the cause of the strife, disorder, and injustice that begins to prevail amongst them as they pursue their personal, and frequently conflicting, desires.

Augustine often refers to human sin as a privation of the good and denies that it has any positive existence. Far from denying the detrimental effects of sin, privation theory rightly identifies that sin keeps things from being the way they are supposed to be; it makes the abnormal the norm. When anyone sins, they act out of character. All people want to feel at ease to be themselves, which is to be happy. Yet the deep-seated belief that something temporal can make or break happiness prevents people from thriving because it makes them slaves to their desires for transient things, and therefore nurtures attitudes like pride, envy, and fear, which inhibit or distort the free expression of the human spirit. Acknowledging and abandoning that belief would enable people to recover the freedom to be themselves. Yet this is precisely the measure for securing happiness that fallen persons are generally unwilling to take.

The tragedy of the fallen situation is that people who try to be most useful to themselves by looking out for their own interests actually do what is most harmful to themselves.¹⁴⁸ In attempting to love themselves, they hate themselves. What is even more tragic to Augustine's mind is that people are usually perplexed when they find unhappiness after they have taken every precaution to ensure personal happiness.

The difference between human beings living before and after the fall, as Augustine summarizes it, is the difference between those that know and love God as

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 13.7.10 (CCL 50A, 451-4); see also 14.16.22.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 12.10.15; 13.4.7.

the Highest Good, and therefore have the ability to always find the Good in temporal things, and thus to see it eternally, and those that consider the self and the pursuit of its desires to be so great a good, and for that very reason are unable to find lasting happiness either temporally or eternally.¹⁴⁹

Redemption

In books four and thirteen of *De Trinitate*, Augustine explains how the Son of God restored the knowledge of God as the Highest Good He originally imparted human beings made in His image.¹⁵⁰ Since the scope of human knowledge had been restricted to corporeal goods in virtue of the loss of the knowledge of the incorporeal Good, the Son of God took on bodily form.¹⁵¹ In doing this, Augustine insists, the Son maintained His divine form. The bishop sees no inherent contradiction in the claim that Christ was fully human and fully divine, because human beings were created with the potential for union with God. In assuming a human body, the Son did not abandon His divine nature. He actualized the potential to know God fully that human beings could only realize at the end of time. Inasmuch as Christ accomplished this feat in a human body, Augustine writes, the Father was greater than Him. Inasmuch as He retained His divine form throughout His life on earth, He remained co-equal with the Father at all times.¹⁵²

On earth, Christ continued His eternal work of reflecting the Spirit of God, who gestures towards the Father, His work of *being* the Image of the Trinity. His coming to reveal God thus revealed for the first time that the nature of God is Triune.¹⁵³ Because He revealed the Triune nature of God while in the form of a human person, the Incarnate Son at once revealed that all human persons are made in the image of the Trinity and are therefore designed to work as He does, that is, to bring glory to the Father in all the work the human spirit undertakes.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 14.14.18.

¹⁴⁹ Idem., *Gn. litt.* 11.15.20.

¹⁵⁰ See also Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* 1.11-17 (CCL 32, 12-15), trans. R.P.H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁵¹ Idem., *trin.*, 8.1.2 (CCL 50, 269-70); 13.10.13 (CCL 50A, 399-400); 13.14.18 (CCL 50A, 406-7).

¹⁵² Ibid., 1.7.14 (CCL 50, 44-6); 1.11.22 (CCL 50, 60-1).

¹⁵³ Ibid., 13.11.15. (CCL 50A, 401-2).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 12.6.7-7.12 (CCL 50, 361-7).

When Christ ascended into heaven and sent the Spirit at Pentecost, His revelation was fully and finally accomplished. In His absence, Christ confirmed the message He always sought to communicate, namely, that the Spirit of God is not to glorify the self but another, the Father, who only ever gives of Himself. By removing the actual presence of the Spirit of God through the departure of His own Person, Christ reinstated the potential of all human beings to live according to the Spirit He made manifest.¹⁵⁵

By placing faith in Christ, Augustine teaches, a person rediscovers that God the Father is the Highest Good and is therefore awakened to the realization that He has always been the proper object of the intellect, which has always unwittingly borne His image.¹⁵⁶ In making this discovery, the mind becomes aware of its ultimate cognitive objective, which is to know the Good and to evaluate the goods it knows now with that goal in mind.¹⁵⁷ Although faith raises awareness of the image, Augustine emphasizes that it does not immediately restore it. He thus proceeds to address the question why human beings are not in fact restored to their original state of happiness, in view of the fact that Christ is said to have accomplished the work of redemption once and for all.

In this effort, the bishop draws the reader's attention back to the purpose for which human beings were made. They were designed to consistently work, of their own volition, in the spirit that prioritizes the Highest Good over temporal goods. This is exactly the habit that was broken at the fall. While faith in Christ entails profession of belief in God as the Highest Good and thus reinstates the potential to work in this habit, it does not instantly re-create the habit. Instead, faith must be made effective and the effects of the fall gradually overcome, as reason practices operating in an attitude of faith until the habit of doing so is fully re-formed.¹⁵⁸

On Augustine's reasoning, Christ did not carry the redeemed away immediately so that they might re-learn to become exactly what He made them to be, that God's unchanging purposes might be fulfilled. Although laborious, Augustine

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 13.10.14 (CCL 50A, 400-1).

¹⁵⁶ Idem., *Gn. litt.*, vol. 1, 3.20.32.

¹⁵⁷ Idem., *trin.*, 13.17.22 (CCL 50A, 412-3).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 13.16.20 (CCL 50A, 409-10).

thinks human efforts to form faithful habits are nonetheless gratifying, inasmuch as they help the labourer appreciate what it means to be made in God's image in a way that was not possible before the Fall. In the struggle to re-conform to the lost image of God, the wayfarer has the benefit of experiencing a double measure of the grace God eternally, unchangeably gives.

Conforming to God's Image

In the first half of *De Trinitate*, Augustine sought to give an account of the Triune nature of God as Christ revealed it. In the latter half of the treatise, starting with book eight, his goal is to train the reader to imitate Christ.¹⁵⁹ As the *Imago Dei*, Christ constantly manifested the Spirit of God and brought glory to the Father. A profession of faith in His revelation of the Triune God is the Highest Good thus instigates the process of conforming to His image.¹⁶⁰ Making progress in the process, to Augustine, means consistently applying the knowledge of God as Highest Good in knowing created goods, subjecting the lower to the higher, and the temporal to the eternal. Striving to evaluate reality in view of the knowledge of God entails learning to regard it as Christ did and by these means preparing to see God.

Because it is impossible to know 'what God is' in the present life, as God is invisible by nature, Augustine concludes that the intellect must begin to participate in its eternal life through the knowledge of 'what God is not'. What God is not, he goes on to say, is 'earth or heaven'.¹⁶¹ By this Augustine means to reiterate that the good things the intellect knows now are not *the* Good.¹⁶² When the mind maintains this perspective, it brings the knowledge of God as the ultimate source of human happiness to bear on the knowledge of the natural order and simultaneously checks the fallen tendency to consider any object under consideration as something able to make or break human happiness. As this perspective gradually enables the intellect to overcome the effects of the fall, it teaches the mind to reason with faith in Christ

¹⁵⁹ See Lewis Ayres, "The Christological Context of Augustine's *De Trinitate* Thirteen: Toward Relocating Books Eight through Fifteen," *Augustinian Studies* 29:1 (1998): 111-39; see also Luigi Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 68-105.

¹⁶⁰ Augustine, *trin.*, 8.3.5 (CCL 50, 273-4); see also *doct. chr.*, 1.5, 8, 10 (CCL 32, 9, 11-12).

¹⁶¹ Idem., *trin.*, 8.2.3 (CCL 50, 270-1).

¹⁶² Ibid., 8.3.4 (CCL 50, 272-3).

and so to reason like Christ, who saw all things working for the Father's good purposes.¹⁶³

At first glance, it may seem that Augustine's 'negative way' to God denigrates all that 'God is not' whether it be in heaven or on earth. Yet Augustine thinks just the opposite is true. As the bishop demonstrates when he delineates his psychological analogies, the denial of any limited good as an ultimate good actually allows the intellect to affirm creation's goodness in all circumstances. In a fallen world where the good is often hard to find and the goods that are found are fleeting, the 'negative' affirmation that anything in reality can take the place of God enables one to give a positive assessment of the good in reality and thus to agree with God's own assessment of reality at all times.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGIES TO THE TRINITY

After offering his preliminary explanation of the 'negative way' to God in book eight, Augustine proceeds to introduce his seven psychological analogies to the Trinity. With these analogies, Augustine teaches the reader how to cultivate the skill of reasoning in faith, through which faith is made effective as reason's outlook and ultimately actions are aligned to the professed belief in the Triune God as Highest Good.

Intellect, Knowledge, Love (*mens, notita, amor*)

The first trinity Augustine presents in book nine is not strictly psychological. It is the trinity of lover, beloved, and the love that is shared between them. This trinity is introduced to underscore the point that cultivating love for the God who *is* Love is the goal of conforming to His image. In that sense, love is primary for Augustine. Even so, Augustine notes that it is impossible to love what one does not first know at least to some extent.¹⁶⁴ Although one may not fully know what one loves at the outset, which is the case with God, one must at least know that one wants to know it—that one desires it—in order to eventually know and love it in entirety. Such 'unfulfilled' knowledge is what Augustine would call faith, and there is a sense

¹⁶³ Ibid., 11.5.8-9 (CCL 50, 343-5).

in which knowledge takes priority over love in cases where what is loved is not yet obtained, inasmuch as knowledge is needed to bring one to an as yet unattained love. To have faith in anything is to have designated it as an object of desire. Faith and desire thus anticipate total knowledge and love of the object of faith and desire.

Neither faith nor desire takes priority absolutely in Augustine's thought, because love compels one to know and knowledge enables one to love an object that still stands at a distance. At every step which contributes to closing the distance, the faith and desire that anticipate love and knowledge, respectively, are present together. Indeed, either one is indicative of the other. From his perspective, every act of loving is equally an act of knowing, as well as the other way around.

This discussion naturally leads into Augustine's introduction of the first psychological analogy: the trinity of intellect, knowledge, and love, which corresponds to the measure, number, and weight of human beings.¹⁶⁵ In presenting this analogy, the bishop reiterates that the intellect accumulates knowledge of what it desires most. Ultimately, moreover, it is bound to obtain what it really loves, because that which the intellect loves is the unfulfilled objective that directs all its knowing efforts and that is increasingly realized as those efforts are made.

When the knowledge and love of God was lost at the fall, Augustine recalls that human beings began to conform their desires to creatures rather than to God. They accumulated knowledge that contributed to the fulfilment of the desires for creatures rather than for God and thus forfeited the chance of attaining the Love of God.¹⁶⁶ If anyone hopes to learn to reason in faith and eventually experience the desired object of faith, divine love, consequently, Augustine instructs that they must commit to loving the Triune God above all else by placing faith in Christ who revealed Him as the Highest Good.¹⁶⁷ The commitment to God that is made in faith is the expression of an overriding desire for Him, which reinstates the intellect's potential to pursue knowledge with the goal of loving God.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 8.6.9 (CCL 50, 279-84).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 9.3.3 (CCL 50, 305).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 13.20.26 (CCL 50A, 418-9).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 9.8.13 (CCL 50, 305).

Memory, Understanding, Will (*memoria, intellegentia, voluntas*)

According to Augustine, the second trinity of memory, understanding, and will is an even closer analogy to the Trinity because it reveals how knowledge is actually acquired—and the image of the Trinity reflected—in the mode of intellectual vision.¹⁶⁸ When Augustine explains this analogy in book ten, building on conclusions drawn in previous works, what he elaborates his theory of knowledge.¹⁶⁹ In this section, I will describe how memory, understanding, and will co-operate to bring about a general growth in knowledge. Subsequently, I will show how the understanding the intellect acquires mediates an understanding of God, or increases the faith that readies the mind to understand God, when the intellect that operates desires God.

According to the Bishop of Hippo, memory is what defines and distinguishes the human person. Memory retains all the information that has been acquired through the three modes of cognition. It therefore includes all a person's experiences, the thoughts and feelings that were associated with those experiences, desires for certain kinds of experience, skills acquired through experience, and stories about others' experiences.¹⁷⁰ While the memory preserves all the judgments the intellect has formed in the understanding on the basis of first or second-hand experience, it also keeps many hazier images that were formed with little or no notice by one that did not understand or consider important what was perceived when it was perceived.

This happens, for example, when someone says something to another person who is not paying attention and therefore proves unable to account for what was said, Augustine writes.¹⁷¹ Although the truth is technically that the speaker was heard, the hearer did not feel compelled to commit the speaker's words to memory because there was no desire to attend to the person that was communicating or to the message that was being communicated. As Augustine emphasizes, the will is what compels a person to pay attention to or ignore information. It forms the intellect's desires for

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 10.11.17-18 (CCL 50, 329-31).

¹⁶⁹ Also see *Gn. litt.* 12, *conf.* 10, and the Cassiciacum dialogues.

¹⁷⁰ Idem., *conf.*, 10.8.13 (CCL 27, 161-2).

¹⁷¹ Idem., *trin.*, 11.8.15 (CCL 50, 352).

understanding. The understanding a person already possesses, moreover, is representative of the type of knowledge that one desires, and it attunes the will to seek new understanding that satisfies those same fundamental desires.

Whenever the memory acquires or becomes aware of information that the mind's current understanding cannot explain but has been predisposed by the will to desire to explain, a will for new understanding arises. The sense of dissatisfaction or restlessness that accompanies the sudden realization that the understanding is inadequate to the will for understanding incites the mind to search through the resources in the memory that were previously unnoticed or thought unimportant in order to render the new experience intelligible.¹⁷²

If all the resources needed to come to a conclusion that satisfies the will cannot be found in the memory, the will is likely to direct the intellect to go in search of new information that will serve this end.¹⁷³ For this reason, the quest for understanding in the memory that both limits and defines the quest, as Augustine describes it, is not entirely straightforward. On his account, the intellect makes progress towards understanding by trial and error as it forms, tests, rejects, and revises possible solutions to the problem it wills to resolve.¹⁷⁴

Augustine does not seem to think the discursive nature of human knowledge a detriment to it. To the contrary, he contends that 'doubt' indicates that one is actively and effectively engaged in the knowing process. 'If I doubt', Augustine writes, 'I exist' (*si fallor, sum*).¹⁷⁵ This conclusion is just one of the corollaries of his belief that no finite good is the supreme Good. On the grounds of the claim that no particular truth the intellect knows can capture the whole Truth, Augustine concludes that things are "in some respects true precisely because they are in other respects false."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Idem., *conf.*, 10.11.18 (CCL 27, 164-5).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 10.8.12 (CCL 50, 161).

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 10.10.14 (CCL 50, 162).

¹⁷⁶ Idem., *sol.*, 2.10.18: *Quid putas, nisi haec omnia inde esse in quibusdam vera, unde in quibusdam falsa sunt, et ad suum verum hoc solum eis prodesse, quod ad aliud falsa sunt. Unde ad id, quod esse aut volunt aut debent, nullo modo perveniunt, si falsa esse fugiunt.*

By ‘false’ Augustine simply means less than the whole of Truth. The knowledge that something is false, as knowledge of the sense in which it is less than totally true, is knowledge of the way in which it can come closer to the truth.¹⁷⁷ Since true things cannot succeed in becoming “what they want or ought to be as long as they refuse to be false,”¹⁷⁸ Augustine thinks it senseless to “dread falsities and desire truth”¹⁷⁹ as if it were the only good. In an order where there is no full disclosure of Truth, what is false has a truth bearing function.

To illustrate how an idea of inferior truth facilitates efforts to better know the truth, Augustine discusses the difference between his knowledge of the city of Carthage, which he had seen, and the city of Alexandria, which he had never seen.¹⁸⁰ Augustine states that he had many ideas about Carthage, which he knew to be true because he had been a witness to their truth. His idea of Alexandria, on the other hand, was much more vague, at least initially. In order to envision what Alexandria was like, the bishop relates that he had to combine images of cities he had visited, such as Carthage, with facts he learned about Alexandria from external sources.

The discovery of something new about cities in general or Alexandria in particular incited him to reject or adjust an existing concept of Alexandria and make it more precise. In the process and for the purpose of forming a picture of Alexandria, then, Augustine notes that he had to turn the attention of his mind to many things besides Alexandria that promised to help him understand Alexandria. In time, he developed a fuller picture of Alexandria, which not only increased his desire to experience the city but also made him feel ready to navigate it on arrival. The vision of Alexandria itself would substantiate his correct insights into the nature of the city and correct those aspects of his idea that remained inaccurate.

The ‘erroneous’ ideas of Alexandria that Augustine entertained along the way to forming a clearer picture of it—with the help of mental pictures of things he had known by first or second hand—were not detrimental but beneficial to his knowing

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 2.5-10.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.10.18: *Quare, si quibusdam, ut verum aliquid sint, prodest, ut sint aliquid falsum, cur tantopere falsitates formidamus et pro magno bono adpetimus veritatem?*

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Idem., *trin.*, 8.6.9 (CCL 50, 279-83).

effort, because they stimulated the intellect on towards truer understanding.¹⁸¹ In affirming this, Augustine indicates that the way to know what is closer to the truth is a negative one. To come to know any truth, in other words, the intellect must accept that it does not already know what it desires to know, but only that it desires to know it. The desire to grasp a certain truth doubles as faith that it exists to be known. Together, desire and faith motivate and direct the search for the truth.¹⁸²

The way towards attaining the desired understanding of truth is basically a way of falsification, in which the intellect converts the things it knows, which are not the thing it desires to know, into speculations about the truth it does not know but wishes to know. For Augustine, the way of negation is the only way a human being can come to understand any as yet unknown truth, because one can only come to know what one does not know by drawing on what one already knows.

On this model of cognition, provisional ideas about the truth must be entertained and then revised or rejected with further experience until they increasingly resemble and then seem to accurately represent the truth that is desired. All knowing is ‘faith seeking understanding’ (*fides quaerens intellectum*), because all knowing efforts begin with an unfulfilled cognitive objective, which is reached by degrees as the intellect employs what it does know to pursue understanding of the unknown.

According to Augustine, the only way to err on the cognitive scheme of faith seeking understanding, such that what is false utterly fails to bear the truth and is patently false, is to settle on a notion of the truth that obviously falls short of the desired truth, that is, to intentionally and counter-intuitively obstruct the way to truth through the passivity of apathy or the activity of lying to oneself and others about the nature of the truth.¹⁸³

Each time the intellect forms or adjusts an idea of what is true, Augustine states that the product is “that which was hidden in the memory in a dispersed and

¹⁸¹ Idem., *Enchiridion* ch. 17; 19-21 (CCL 46, 19-21; 87-94), trans. J.F. Shaw (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999); idem, *De utilitate credendi* ch. 10-11 (CCL 46, 240-1).

¹⁸² Idem., *trin.*, 10.1.2.

¹⁸³ Idem., *ench.*, ch. 18; 22 (CCL 46, 85-7; 94-5); idem, *De mendacio & Contra mendacium* (CSEL 41).

disordered way before [the thought] was conceived, the [understanding], which arises from memory in the thought when it is perceived, and the will which combines both and so from these two and itself as a third completes one single thing.”¹⁸⁴ Augustine calls the resulting instance of understanding a ‘trinity of understanding’; the image of that trinity, a ‘mental word’ (*verbum mentis*).¹⁸⁵ This, in short, is an idea or judgment.

According to Augustine, the trinities of the understanding return to the memory where they collide with what is already tacitly stored there. As a result of this, what was formerly thought insignificant may now appear important. The trinities may prompt the will to direct the mind to transform contents in the memory, which were previously unnoticed, into matters of explicit understanding. Because of the newly attained trinity of thought, consequently, the mind may suddenly be motivated to attend to things without as well as within. Whenever this happens, the process of concept production facilitated by the cooperation of memory, understanding, and will, begins all over again.

For this reason, Augustine states that the trinities of understanding are constantly changing.¹⁸⁶ They are intrinsically fecund, because the memory, or the tacit component of human knowledge, enacts the possibility of combining, expanding, and multiplying the trinities of thought *ad infinitum*, through cooperation with the understanding and the will. Augustine’s appeal to the tacit component in human knowledge is his way of resolving the Platonic *Meno* paradox.¹⁸⁷ The paradox is that one must already know X in order to be able to identify it, yet there is no need to discover X if one already knows it.

Augustine solves the paradox by pointing out that faith in X necessarily precedes knowledge of X where human agents are concerned.¹⁸⁸ The intellect can, indeed must, know X potentially or tacitly before it knows X actually or explicitly. It

¹⁸⁴ Idem., *trin.*, 11.7.12 (CCL 50, 366-7): *tot igitur huius generis trinitates quot recordationes quia nulla est earum ubi non haec tria sint, illud quod in memoria reconditum est etiam antequam cogitetur, et illud quod fit in cogitatione cum cernitur, et voluntas utrumque coniungens et ex utroque ac tertia se ipsa unum aliquid complens.*

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 15.11.20 (CCL 50A, 486-9).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 11.8.12 (CCL 50, 368).

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 12.15.24 (CCL 50, 377-8).

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 15.21.40 (CCL 50A, 490-3).

knows X inasmuch as it believes there is X to know and has the knowledge of X as its cognitive objective. This is the sense in which the mind can simultaneously not know and know X. It does not know X so far as it has yet to substantiate the belief that X can be known through efforts to acquire understanding of X.

The Stoic philosophers that dominated the philosophical scene before Augustine's time resolved the paradox by arguing that it is possible for human beings to form ideas that correspond precisely to attendant realities. Their contention was that all things were made in accord with a fixed seminal reason, which the mind was suited to grasp.¹⁸⁹ The academic sceptics of Augustine's day reacted to this view and declared Plato's paradox impossible to resolve on the grounds that the undefined elements and inaccuracies inherent in the knowing process undermine the possibility of attaining knowledge of truth such as the Stoics defined it. They therefore concluded that certain knowledge of truth was altogether unattainable.

In *De Trinitate* as in earlier works, Augustine overturns the arguments of the Stoics and the sceptics, even while enacting their true intuitions, by demonstrating that faith is the very precondition of gaining and growing in the knowledge of truth.¹⁹⁰ He affirms with the Stoics that knowledge of truth in eternal types is achievable. Yet he also echoes the sceptical claim that totalized knowledge of truth is unattainable in the human situation. Augustine finds away to substantiate the accurate insights of both Stoics and sceptics while avoiding their extreme conclusions, inasmuch as he argues that the obtainment of truth is contingent upon the faith-based acknowledgement that one does not have it at the outset and that one must make progress towards it by trial and error. In arguing along these lines, Augustine allows for the undefined elements and inaccuracies inherent in the knowing process without denying the possibility of knowing truth. He affirms and redeems what was valuable in the observations of philosophers working in both Stoic and sceptical camps, with the help of a fundamentally Platonist concept of human

¹⁸⁹ See Marcia L. Colish's account of Augustine's relation to Stoicism in, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1990).

¹⁹⁰ For Augustine's response to academic sceptics, see *Contra academicos* (CCL 29); *De utilitate credendi* (CCL 46); *De fide rerum quae non videntur* (CCL 46); *trin.*, 15.12.21 (CCL 50A, 490-3).

knowledge which he transformed into his theory of knowledge as ‘faith seeking understanding’.

In this theory, the mind is said to increase in understanding the better that understanding is committed to the memory. Thus there are two senses in which knowledge may be buried deeply in the memory. It may be buried there due to neglect, that is, because it is a matter of faith that has yet to be made a matter of explicit understanding. Or it may be buried because it has been so well memorized that the mind does not need to think about its understanding in order to act in accordance with it.

When anyone memorizes or places faith in an idea that has been formed, they automatically bring the idea bear in other acts of knowing. If the rules of a foreign language have been effectively memorized, to take Augustine’s example, then they are applied as a matter of habit and the language is fluently spoken.¹⁹¹ In cases like this one, the mind is said to know the rules better the less frequently it needs to pause and refer to them. In fact, stopping to think about them means halting progress in using them as tools to know other things, which is exactly what Augustine thinks ideas are: resources discovery rather than ends in themselves.

The more fluently the mind employs its ideas in its heuristic efforts, the more certain it is about them. Certitude is something functional for Augustine, and it comes in degrees. It is not the sort of thing the mind either has or does not have. The less time the intellect spends determining whether or how to regard reality in the light of an idea and the more easily it simply acts on its ideas, the more certain it is about them. Ideas the memory has truly interiorized are exteriorized. If human patterns of thought have truly changed, the change will be evidenced in changed behaviour, and in the ability to give an account of how behaviours were changed. This is how Augustine seems to think ideas are justified, namely, by their effects and by those that can give explain the cause of the effect. On the basis of the belief that the things a person commits to memory determine who they are and the way they think and act, Augustine speaks of the memory as the “essence, mind, and life”

¹⁹¹ Idem., *conf.*, 1.8.27 (CCL 27).

(*essentia, mens, vita*)¹⁹² of human persons. And he reminds that reader that what they are bound to memorize is what they desire most.

On Augustine's account, that which one desires most is that which one thinks will bring the greatest happiness. All people retain in the memory the desire to be happy, Augustine observes. The desire for happiness is the overarching desire that directs the intellect to acquire knowledge of the source of happiness in which the intellect has placed its faith. At the Fall, the bishop recalls, the intellect began to put faith in corporeal, temporal things. The problem with this approach in his view is that such truths can always be negated. They do not constitute the whole Truth, which is what the misguided intellect tries to make them be. The whole Truth is and can only be incorporeal and eternal, for only such a Truth embraces all modes and manifestations of truth. True happiness can only be found in the universal Truth that is the truth of all particular truths. Yet the universal Truth is precisely the one that cannot be grasped in the realm of finite truths.

While the elusiveness of Truth led the academic sceptics to despair of knowing truth at all, where the Stoics counter-intuitively denied its elusiveness, Augustine regards it as a positive, inasmuch as it motivates the intellect that reasons in faith to strive without ceasing after the object of faith, as opposed to abandoning the search for truth or stopping short in the middle of it. From his perspective, the striving is the source of the mind's integrity in the present life, and it is what ensures that the mind will attain what it desires in the life to come.

What the person of faith remembers when they remember the desire for the truth that brings happiness is the desire for God.¹⁹³ Yet the recollection of God is inevitably only a faint one at first. Although initial faith in Christ removes the cause of the mind's disease, by restoring the knowledge that the knowledge of God is the intellect's ultimate cognitive goal, Augustine reasons that this is just the first step towards being cured. The second is to heal the disease itself.¹⁹⁴ The disease, which is the loss of the knowledge of God, is healed as the intellect memorizes how to operate

¹⁹² Idem., *trin.*, 10.11.18 (CCL 50, 330-1).

¹⁹³ Idem., *conf.*, 10.20.29 (CCL 27, 170-1).

¹⁹⁴ Idem., *trin.*, 14.17.23 (CCL 50A, 454-5).

under the influence of faith in God as the Highest Good and thus comes to truly believe that God is the real source of happiness.¹⁹⁵

Faith in Christ establishes that what-God-is is what the mind aims to know, even though it does not disclose what-God-is. Because of faith, the desire to know God is brought to bear in efforts to know other things. Love for God directs the mind to attend to some things, to ignore others. It determines what the mind perceives and the way it perceives it. It checks the inordinate desire for temporal things, and transfers those desires from “temporal to eternal things, from visible to intelligible things, from carnal to spiritual things.”¹⁹⁶

With the effort to know God as with the effort to know any truth, it is possible to love what one does not know and live in accordance with love by loving those things that promise to help the mind attain the goal.¹⁹⁷ Reasoning in faith makes it possible to obtain the knowledge of God because it prevents the mind from judging its objects as the ultimate goods they are not and allows it to consider them as the limited goods they really are.

Philosophers are often troubled by the realization that human minds are prone to entertain false beliefs. What is even more unsettling is the fact that the mind often remains unaware of its false beliefs until a major mistake exposes them. If one was conscious that one adhered to false beliefs, one would likely try to be rid of them. The problem is that it seems human beings have no recourse apart from failure to discovering what they wrongly affirm. As a result, some conclude that it is impossible to be objective in the human situation.

Augustine thinks differently. In his opinion, adherence to belief in God as Highest Good can help to check false beliefs before they cause harm. Such beliefs are usually based in one way or another on a misguided assumption that some object or personal interest matters more than anything else. The elevation of a private good to the status of all-inclusive good tends to skew the mind’s perception of everything

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 8.5.7-8 (CCL 50, 276-9); 15.2.2 (CCL 50A, 460-2).

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 14.17.23 (CCL 50A, 454-5): *in agnitione igitur dei justitiaque et sanctitate veritatis qui de die in diem proficiendo renovatur transfert amorem a temporalibus ad aeterna, a visibilibus ad intelligibilia, a carnalibus ad spiritalia, atque ab istis cupiditatem frenare atque minuere illisque se caritate alligare diligenter insistit; see also conf., 10.17.26 (CCL 27, 168-9).*

else it encounters. Indeed, the mind that forms a habit of operating on such skewed perceptions effectively comes to reside in an ‘alternate reality’ that is bound to come crashing down when it becomes necessary to face reality. The way to prevent this from happening, in Augustine’s view, is to train the mind not to live in a fanciful world in the first place, but to embrace and evaluate reality as it really is.

To see things from such a sound perspective is to see them from the ‘divine’ perspective that guards against the formation of patently false beliefs. In a realm where it is impossible to transcend space and time in order to determine what is true and how to act, the only access human subjects have to objective knowledge comes through orientation towards the objective of knowing God, the Highest Good. This perspective on created reality that faith in Christ produces is the affect of faith in what the mind is seeking to understand. That faith doubles as the understanding of the God that has yet to be understood. To live by faith with respect to temporal things is to live in accordance with the knowledge of God and thus to form a habit that will last for eternity.¹⁹⁸

Since every faithful act of knowing is performed in a spirit that glorifies the Father, Augustine affirms that every such act is performed in remembrance of Christ who manifested the Spirit of God and therefore keeps on manifesting it. Memory’s labour to make understanding adequate to the will, and its eventual success signifies the switch from ‘the old to the new’ that took place in the mystery of His Passion and Resurrection.¹⁹⁹ The ‘epiphany’ of new understanding, which is at once the end of one effort to gain understanding and the beginning of another, represents both the coming of Christ and His eventual coming again. That epiphany gives the mind a sense of the final rest in God, yet the fleetingness of the will’s satisfaction with its understanding teaches it not to stop short in the pursuit of understanding until the final rest is actually achieved.

Every act of knowing that remembers the life and work of Christ helps the

¹⁹⁷ Idem., *trin.*, 8.4.6-5.8 (CCL 50, 274-9).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 13.20.26 (CCL 50A, 418-20).

¹⁹⁹ Idem., *Epistle 140 (The Book of Grace)*, trans. Sister Wilfred Parsons in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 20 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953), ch. 12.

intellect better memorize how to reason with faith in Christ.²⁰⁰ As the mind improves at this skill, its ordinary thoughts are formed through the Son, in the human spirit, under the influence of the belief that the Father is the Highest Good. Mundane thought processes come to double as prayers in virtue of the formality under which they are conceived. Through those thought processes, conversely, the mind discovers the profound and inexhaustible significance of the principles it always professed to believe, as per Plato's *Meno*. It thereby comes to increasingly participate subjectively in the objective knowledge of God. As this happens, thoughts and eventually actions become consistent with the stated belief that God is the Highest Good.

According to Augustine, one who faithfully strives to determine the way and extent to all things accomplish some good, overcoming limited ideas of what is good and the effects of the fall in the process, cultivates the habit of reasoning in the mind of Christ who remained confident in God's goodness, even in the hour of His death.²⁰¹ The upshot of privation theory, after all, is that trials, evil, and even personal sin need not devastate nor separate one from the love of God, whose good plans can never be upset. Every time a person performs an act of reasoning in faith, the mind's mode of thinking becomes increasingly analogous to Christ. The effaced image of God that was always there is renewed and progressively conformed to the image of Him who is the Image of God.

The ultimate goal of the process of faith seeking understanding is to learn to reason in faith automatically and reflect God's image consistently, as if by second nature, that is, to pray without ceasing. Where this happens, the image of God is restored and a person predisposed to work at all times in the spirit of Christ who knew and made known the goodness of the Father.²⁰² The restoration of the image of God restores the will's freedom to direct the intellect anywhere and understand God's goodness through its understanding of all other things and to 'preserve justice'

²⁰⁰ Idem., *trin.*, 14.16.22 (CCL 50A, 451-4).

²⁰¹ Ibid., 11.6.10 (CCL 50, 339-41).

²⁰² Ibid., 10.1.2 (CCL 50, 312-4).

amongst them. All of this prepares the intellect for the vision of the Good Itself, the sight of the Reality that accomplishes the perfection of the image.²⁰³

Ability, Learning, Use (*ingenium, doctrina, usus*)

The next analogy Augustine presents in book ten is that of ability, learning and use. With this analogy, the bishop validates the many different ways of putting memory, understanding, and will to work, that is, the many ways of directing thoughts and actions to the Father, through the Son, in the human spirit.²⁰⁴ Although he affirms that all people of faith share the objective of knowing and loving God, Augustine emphasizes that each one can only strive to obtain that objective in accordance with an individual level and type of ability.²⁰⁵ While all are informed by belief in the Triune God, each applies the belief in a different way. The faith they share is not one in number, but one in kind. There are as many ways to express the Spirit of God as there are human spirits.

Because no one has achieved the goal of fully knowing and loving God, yet all with faith strive towards it, Augustine reasons that the efforts of one can inform those of another working towards this end. Here as ever, the way forward on the path of faith seeking understanding is a way of negation. One can learn more about what it means to place faith in God from another, whose way of desiring God differs from one's own. As the people of faith express their faith through acts of charity or the use of individual abilities their individual faith increases as well as the faith of the community.²⁰⁶ In the context of Christian faith, the different types and level of ability are not a cause for competition but celebration, inasmuch as the way one imitates Christ can stimulate another to imitate Christ in yet another of an infinite number of possible ways.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ Ibid., 14.9.12 (CCL 50A, 438-40).

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 10.11.17 (CCL 50, 329-30).

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 13.2.5 (CCL 50A, 385-7).

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 13.4.7 (CCL 50A, 389-91); 15.19.34 (CCL 50A, 509-11).

Corporeal & Spiritual Analogies

When the intellect works in accordance with its abilities from the standpoint of faith, it considers temporal things with reference to eternal things and therefore contemplates the eternal by means of the temporal. The acquisition of knowledge (*scientia*) through corporeal and spiritual vision becomes coextensive with the acquisition of the wisdom (*sapientia*) of God.²⁰⁸ As the intellect conforms to Christ, in other words, the senses and imagination are simultaneously redeemed.

For this reason, Augustine argues in book eleven that analogies to the Trinity can be detected in the corporeal and spiritual faculties, in addition to the three associated with intellectual vision (intellect, knowledge, love; memory, understanding, will; ability, learning, use). An analogy can be discerned in corporeal vision, for instance, which consists in the sight of the eyes, the object seen, and the perceptive faculties' attention to its object.²⁰⁹ The trinity of spiritual vision unites the memory of sense perceptions, the internal comparison of perceptions, and the resulting image.²¹⁰ Although the corporeal and spiritual faculties cannot properly be said to bear the image of God since they will pass away, they are rightly described as analogues because they will be perfected even as they are replaced with two related faculties, which will carry on operating in an incorporeal order as the 'imperfect' faculties worked in the corporeal one.

In books twelve and thirteen, Augustine goes on to discuss knowledge and wisdom, respectively, offering the mature statement of the views on these issues he espoused in the early Cassiciacum dialogues, especially *De ordine* and *De beata vita*, and spelling out the interrelationship between the analogies associated with knowledge-seeking lower reason and wisdom-seeking higher reason.²¹¹ In *De ordine*, Augustine had stressed the importance of learning to identify order in the cosmos, or becoming trained in matters of science, before attempting to engage in philosophical speculation as to the principles that underlie the natural order, an

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 12.15.25 (CCL 50, 379-80).

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 11.2.2 (CCL 50, 334-7).

²¹⁰ Ibid., 11.3.6 (CCL 50, 340-1): *atque ita illa trinitas ex memoria et interna visione et quae utrumque copulat voluntate, quae tria cum in unum coguntur ab ipso coactu cogitatio dicitur.*

²¹¹ Frederick Van Fleteren has argued this in, "Augustine and Anselm: Faith and Reason," in *Faith Seeking Understanding: Learning and the Catholic Tradition* (Manchester: St. Anselm College Press,

inquiry that falls within the domain of wisdom.²¹² He argued that the most effective way to form an intellectual habit of identifying cosmological order is through a course of study in the liberal arts (i.e. the *trivium*: grammar, logic, rhetoric; and *quadrivium*: arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy), such as the one he outlines in *De ordine* itself. Learning to discern order, he contends, readies the mind to formulate the principles that account for that order through philosophical and theological inquiries. Knowledge, consequently, must precede wisdom.

Although he affirms this, Augustine also observes that the cursory concept of wisdom the untrained mind inevitably though possibly unwittingly entertains is bound to impact the way it pursues knowledge, and eventually wisdom itself. For this reason, he thinks it important to impress upon the young mind that wisdom is that of the Triune God. If the student is allowed to go in search of knowledge without awareness of God's wisdom, Augustine says s/he may come under the impression that the acquisition of knowledge has no ultimate purpose and may fail to do anything useful with it.²¹³ Alternatively, s/he may feel at liberty to define wisdom as s/he wills and grow inordinately proud. In another scenario Augustine describes in *De beata vita*, the student may become so disturbed by the disordered state of the fallen world that s/he declares there to be no principles of order—no wisdom—at all. The learning of such students, Augustine writes, does not make them people of study but of cares; not people of discretion but people ready to discredit everything.²¹⁴

Another class of scholars Augustine mentions includes those like the Platonists, who give a sound explanation of the principles that uphold the natural order, but fail to give an adequate account of the identity of the divine being that sustains the real world order and His ability to intervene in it. They therefore fail, in his opinion, to actually enact their true understanding, which is something he thinks the doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation equip the Christian scholar to accomplish.²¹⁵ Even though Augustine praises the Platonists for their intellectual achievements, he

1991), 59.

²¹² Augustine, *ord.*, 1.9.27 (CCL 29, 102).

²¹³ Idem., *De beata vita*, 1.2 (CCL 29, 65-6).

²¹⁴ Idem., *ord.*, 2.17 (CCL 29, 116).

²¹⁵ Idem., *conf.*, 7.9 (CCL 27, 101-3).

struggles to call the wisdom of philosophers genuine inasmuch as they fail to name the source of their wisdom.²¹⁶

Augustine describes the dangers associated with embarking on the pursuit of knowledge and even wisdom without a preliminary notion of what wisdom is in order to reiterate the importance of starting with the belief that wisdom belongs to the Triune God. There are two ways Augustine thinks a person of faith can adhere to divine wisdom: the way of authority and the way of reason.

The first way more or less bypasses the road to wisdom through knowledge outlined above. It is the shortest and safest way of achieving wisdom because it involves holding fast to wisdom and never letting go of it. Many of the faithful take this first way. “Although they are exceedingly strong in the faith itself,” Augustine writes, “they are not exceedingly strong in science.”²¹⁷ Nevertheless, the wisdom of Christ predisposes them to affirm that there are indeed principles of order that underlie reality, even if they cannot or do not care to understand what those principles are.²¹⁸

For their purposes, the wisdom of Christ is summarized in the cross, upon which the Son of God demonstrated that supposed evils can fulfill divine purposes as much as apparent goods, inordinately desired, can hinder the realization of those purposes.²¹⁹ The cross enables those that cling to it to acknowledge that, “all the things...called evil are still not outside the divine order,”²²⁰ and to endure whatever adversity may befall them on the assumption that all things work together for God for those who love God.²²¹ The cross or wisdom of Christ thus prevents those that

²¹⁶ On these issues, see Luigi Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 40-67 (‘Augustine and Philosophers’) and 219-31 (‘Wisdom or Augustine’s Ideal of Philosophy’).

²¹⁷ Augustine, *trin.*, 14.1.3 (CCL 50A, 423-4): *qua scientia non pollent fideles plurimi, quamuis polleant ipsa fide plurimum. Aliud est enim scire tantummodo quid homo credere debeat propter adipiscendam vitam veatam quae non nisi aeterna est, aliud autem scire quemadmodum hoc ipsum et piis opituletur et contra impios defendatur, quam proprio appellare vocabulo scientiam videtur apostolus.*

²¹⁸ *Idem.*, *ord.*, 1.10.28 (CCL 29, 103).

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.6-7 (CCL 29, 96-7); 1.9.27 (CCL 29, 102); 2.4-8 (CCL 29, 113-21).

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.7.24 (CCL 29, 129): *At multa talia et inperitos, quae a doctis reprehendantur ac derideantur, et dementes homines, quae nec stultorum iudicium fugiunt, facere nemo ambigit, et tamen etiam ista omnia, quae fatemur esse peruersa, non esse praeter divinum ordinem alta quaedam et a multitudinis vel suspitione remotissima disciplina se ita studiosis et deum atque animas tantum amantibus animis manifestaturam esse promittit.*

²²¹ *Idem.*, *trin.*, 13.7.10 (CCL 50A, 394-6); 13.16.20 (CCL 50A, 409-10).

believe on authority from placing their hope in temporal things or from directing the desire for happiness towards them;²²² it instead accustoms them to keep their gaze fixed on eternal things.²²³ It gives them the perspective on their daily lives and difficulties that is required for the attainment of eternal life.

Augustine affirms that the way of authority takes priority in the order of operation since faith is the forerunner of understanding.²²⁴ Yet he calls the way of reason the more highly prized object of desire.²²⁵ Although the way of authority schools people of faith in the wisdom they need to gain eternal life, Augustine does not think it fosters the highest possible level of enjoyment of the temporal life. The way of reason, which comes to the eternal not by passing over but by passing through the temporal is preferable to his mind, because it promotes the happy life of using all things on earth to enjoy God that human beings were originally intended to live.

Those that desire such a life are instructed to not merely believe that God is the source of order but to also seek to grasp the profundity of that belief by bringing it to bear in the very study of His order, however they are gifted to undertake it. Although those that take the way of authority have the potential to reflect God's image just as constantly as those on the way of reason, such that there is no objective discrepancy as regards the clarity of the image, there is a subjectively realizable difference, of which the person who takes the way of reason becomes aware when s/he realizes the happiness that accompanies discoveries of the implications of God's wisdom for science, faith for the endeavours of human reason.²²⁶

The reasoning believer is bound to make such a discovery each time s/he identifies order in some sector of the cosmos and identifies the principle of order with the work of the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, which is the principle that Christ revealed.²²⁷ As s/he does this, the study of order becomes the sort of enterprise in negative theology Augustine encourages his readers to undertake

²²² Ibid., 12.13.21 (CCL 50, 374).

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Idem., *ord.*, 2.9.26 (CCL 29, 121-2).

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Idem., *beata v.*, 2.9; see also *trin.* 13.4.7, ff.

²²⁷ Idem., *ord.*, 2.16 (CCL 29, 131).

in the second half of *De Trinitate*, that is, an inquiry in which all things that are ‘not God’ are regarded under the formality of belief in God. For those that embark on this enterprise, the study of all conceivable things doubles as the study of God, and this renders both intellectual pursuits and faith profoundly meaningful to the inquirers that are prepared through them to find God in all things.²²⁸

Although their circumstances may change, Augustine insists that the wise perspective such persons have cultivated need never alter.²²⁹ Those that maintain it can “survey all things and find nothing unarranged, unclassified, or unassigned to its own place.”²³⁰ They consistently find traces of spiritual things in material things;²³¹ they conform to God rather than the world in every encounter with reality.²³² The steadiness of their outlook prepares them to gaze unflinchingly on God. In the present, it enables them to properly order their lives, that is, to live virtuously and be happy.²³³

On Augustine’s account, the wise outlook that transforms the life of those that obtain it further equips them to “help the godly and defend against the godless.”²³⁴ The perspective on the temporal that is informed by the eternal prepares the wise to address questions about the relationship between faith and life that may arise amongst believers. Besides its instructive power in a Christian setting, a wise perspective is the source of persuasive power in the context of dialogue with unbelieving thinkers. It allows the wise to address the same questions that concern philosophers from the standpoint of faith and to appropriate philosophical insights in doing this.²³⁵ In dealing with those issues, they are able to challenge and correct the mistakes of philosophers even while substantiating their true insights, as Augustine did with the Stoics and sceptics. Moreover, they can explain how Christian doctrines enact the possibility of giving the sort of philosophical account essentially monotheist philosophers such as the Platonists desired to give.

²²⁸ Ibid., 2.2.4 (CCL 29, 108).

²²⁹ Ibid., 2.6.18 (CCL 29, 116-7).

²³⁰ Ibid., 2.4.11 (CCL 29, 113): *si autem mentis oculos erigens atque diffundens simul universa conlustret, nihil non ordinatum suisque semper veluti sedibus distinctum dispositumque reperiet.*

²³¹ Idem., *trin.*, 12.4.4 (CCL 50, 358).

²³² Ibid., 14.7.10 (CCL 50A, 434-5).

²³³ Idem., *ord.*, 1.8.25 (CCL 29, 101).

²³⁴ Idem., *trin.*, 14.1.3 (CCL 50A, 423-2).

In *De Trinitate*, Augustine testifies that his purpose is to provide his erudite Christian readers with the conceptual tools to grow in Christian wisdom, that is, to form a habit of reconciling reason and faith in their own outlook, so as to be ready on demand to bring faith to Christ in dealing with any dilemma, difficult question, or difference in perspective that might arise. By leaning to bring the wisdom of God to bear on matters of ‘science’, Augustine concludes that his readers can carry on the redemptive work of Christ in the world, even as they discover how to use the world’s resources to enjoy God, as He originally intended.

Self Memory, Understanding, Love (*meminit sui, intellegit se, diligit se*)

Augustine introduced his first five psychological analogies for the purpose of helping his readers to form a habit of reasoning in faith in accordance with their individual abilities, that they might bear witness to the profound implications of divine wisdom for all areas of scientific inquiry and for the philosophic inquiry itself. To form that habit, as Augustine explains in book fourteen, is to remember, understand, and love the self.²³⁶ To remember, understand, and love oneself, consequently, is to have trained the mind to operate in a manner analogous to the mind of Christ, who glorified the Father in each expression of His Spirit, and so constantly reflected the image of the Trinity.

In many respects, Augustine considers this last psychological analogy to the Trinity to be the most significant one, because its presence on the mind is indicative of the presence of all the five analogies that come before it. This sixth analogy can only be detected on the intellect that has come by way of the foregoing analogies to experience the restoration of the image of God. While the first five trinities are designed to teach the mind how to reason in this faith, the presence of this sixth trinity indicates that one has truly learned to reconcile faith with reason in their own mind, that the purpose of the earlier trinities has been fulfilled.

In order to remember, understand, and love the self, Augustine reminds his readers, it is first necessary to overcome the effects of the loss of the knowledge and

²³⁵ Idem., *doct. chr.*, 2.40 (CCL 32 (73-5)).

love of the self that occurred at the fall. That loss was the immediate repercussion of the loss of knowledge and love for God, inasmuch as the true knowledge of the self is simply the knowledge of the self as created an image of God. When the knowledge of God was forfeited at the fall, the self lost awareness of itself as a spiritual being designed for the eternal knowledge of God. It began to admire itself “for being what in fact it is not: the source of its own value and potency.”²³⁷ In consequence, it came to rate itself and its selfish desires above all else.²³⁸ The lack of genuine self-knowledge resulted in a perverse love of the self. It became the chief cause of human error, because it compelled the self to make decisions on the basis of a false view of the self as the centre of reality.²³⁹ In operating on this false assumption, the self did not help itself. Rather, it “did that which is opposed to the self.”²⁴⁰ Its so-called self-love was in fact a form of self-hatred.

Although the image of God remained as ever, the intellect was not conscious of its presence and for this reason failed to reflect it. As Augustine famously writes, “You were with me, but I was not with You.”²⁴¹ Since he regards the knowledge and love of God and self as coextensive, Augustine argues that the two that were abandoned together must be recovered simultaneously.²⁴² The memory, understanding, and love of the self must accompany the memory, understanding, and love of God.

The first step towards fully remembering, understanding, and loving God, entails the negation of the self as an end in itself. Such an act enacts the possibility of knowing God through all the things He is not, which are encountered in the real world order. The act is performed when one places faith in Christ, who taught that the Triune God is truly the Highest Good, and did so in His own kenotic assumption of human form, and through His suffering and death on the cross.

²³⁶ Ibid., 14.8.11 (CCL 50A, 435-8).

²³⁷ Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (Ann Arbor: Yale University Press, 1980), 99; see also 40, ff.

²³⁸ Augustine, *trin.*, 10.5.7 (CCL 50, 320-1).

²³⁹ Idem., *ord.*, 1.1.3 (CCL 29, 90).

²⁴⁰ Idem., *trin.*, 13.14.18 (CCL 50, 406-7).

²⁴¹ Idem., *conf.*, 10.27.38 (CCL 27, 175): *Mecum eras, et tecum non eram.*

²⁴² Idem., *sol.*, 1.2.7.

The decision to deny that the self and its desires are ultimate represents a choice to figuratively follow Christ to Golgotha from Gethsemane, where He gave up the will to do His own will. The continuous traversal of that path, by checking selfish desires, enables one to gradually re-learn to genuinely know and love oneself. The failure to do these things prevents the intellect from rightly identifying its abilities, or causes it to rate their value too high or too low. It preoccupies the human spirit with thoughts and worries about itself that keep it from expressing itself. The ongoing denial of selfish desires, by contrast, liberates the self from such inhibitions. By degrees, consequently, it enables one to re-learn how to be oneself, as one would be if one were not hindered by fallen attitudes like envy, fear, and pride.

The decision to sacrifice the self is not a commitment to abandon one's identity, consequently, but to rediscover it, and thus the image of God. The empty tomb at the end of Christ's own sacrificial path reinforces that what is forfeited through the sacrifice of the self is not the human spirit itself but only what encumbered it.²⁴³ The alleged loss is truly a gain, and what is gained is a resurrected life in which the human spirit becomes free to automatically express itself to the glory of God the Father, to constantly reflect the image of the Trinity. The one that imitates Christ in this manner need not give a thought to the self because this one has memorized how to behave like oneself and has therefore achieved the goal of self-reflection, which is self-forgetfulness. As Augustine writes, "it is one thing not to know oneself, and another thing not to think of oneself."²⁴⁴ The one who knows the spirit within so well as to need no time to ponder how to be oneself is the one that can actually do so.

Such interior awareness—which signals that one fully remembers, understands, and loves oneself—predisposes one to determine precisely when and where and how to behave in any circumstance that may arise.²⁴⁵ Just as wisdom helps one judge how to order ordinary goods, so it also enables one to identify the self and others as uniquely gifted bearers of the good and thus facilitates the effort to

²⁴³ Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 62; Augustine, *trin.*, 9.4.4 (CCL 50, 297).

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.5.7 (CCL 50A, 429-30): *quod autem aliud sit non se nosse, aliud non se cogitare iam in eodem volumine ostendimus.*

decide where people could put their abilities to the most effective use.²⁴⁶ In short, the coextensive love of God and self makes it clear how to love one's neighbour as oneself.²⁴⁷ It exposes where one ought to freely give of oneself and where one ought to withhold oneself for the sake of expressing as much love as one's limited abilities and resources enable one to express.²⁴⁸ It enables one to differentiate between the love others request, often for selfish reasons, and the sort of love that God has empowered one to give.

In summary, the memory, understanding, and love of the self is accompanied by a view of the self 'with open face' which readies the mind for the face-to-face vision of God that is to come.²⁴⁹ When Christ returns and the need for faith passes away, the memory, understanding and love of oneself, which is the memory, understanding, and love of the faith one placed in God, will be transformed into the seventh and last Trinitarian analogue that can be found upon the mind. Because of that trinity, the mind will finally ascend to the knowledge of the Triune God Himself. That trinity will determine the manner in which the mind goes about the eternal knowledge of the Trinity.²⁵⁰ The whole goal of *De Trinitate*, Augustine concludes in book fifteen, is to prepare the reader to make a seamless transition to the beatific vision of the Trinity, to learn to enjoy Him to the greatest possible extent in the present, so as to maximize the experience of Him for eternity.

CRITICISMS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGIES

Thus far, I have analyzed Augustine's psychological analogies on the assumption that they outline the dynamic cognitive process of conforming to the image of God. Although this is an assumption that arises from a reading of *De Trinitate* that remains attentive to its content, context, and structure, it is an assumption that is by no means generally made. In this section, I briefly address the claims of those that do not envision the function of the analogies as I do nor see that

²⁴⁵ Idem., *doct. chr.*, 1.26-28 (CCL 32, 20-1).

²⁴⁶ Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 37, ff; *sol.*, 1.2.7

²⁴⁷ Rowan Williams, "Sapientia and the Trinity: Reflections on the *De Trinitate*," in *Melanges T.J. van Bavel, Collectanea Augustiniana* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 320.

²⁴⁸ Augustine, *trin.*, 14.14.18 (CCL 50A, 445-6).

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 14.12.15 (CCL 50A, 442-3).

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 14.2.4 (CCL 50A, 425).

function as plausible. For a more detailed response to the charges commonly levelled against the second half of Augustine's treatise on the Trinity, I refer the reader to the groundbreaking work of scholars that have come before me.

Until recently, academics tended to regard Augustine's psychological analogies as mere "illustrations of three-in-oneness."²⁵¹ Olivier Du Roy is one well-known proponent of the view that the analogies are indicative of Augustine's belief that an understanding of the Triune God can be derived from an analogy to human consciousness, where the image of the Trinity is found.²⁵² Assuming that Augustine did indeed argue that the knowledge of God can be inferred from self-reflection or even from the evaluation of creation, Karl Barth accused the bishop of founding the discipline of natural theology, which operates on the belief that it is possible to discern the existence and nature of God apart from the revelation of Christ.²⁵³

In arguing along such lines, Du Roy and those that accept his conclusions contend that Augustine believed that a person contemplates God best when "retired from the world in glorious and intimate seclusion."²⁵⁴ He thus "handed over to the West a dogmatic pattern which tends to cut off the knowledge of the Trinity from the economy of salvation."²⁵⁵ Similar charges, incidentally, have been put to Anselm and Aquinas.

The last mentioned charge is one that theologians like Karl Rahner, Catherine La Cugna, and Colin Gunton have picked up and advanced.²⁵⁶ According to La Cugna, Augustine's psychological analogies establish that, "God and the self are complete and enclosed within themselves rather than when in relationship with others."²⁵⁷ His model therefore promotes individualism and sidesteps the social responsibilities that constitute human life. It segregates the knowledge of God

²⁵¹ Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 75. Incidentally, John Rist accepts such an interpretation in *Augustine*, 72.

²⁵² On Du Roy, see Lewis Ayres in *Nicaea and Its Legacy*; Luigi Gioia draws on Ayres' research in giving his assessment of Du Roy in *Theological Epistemology*, 6, ff.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 11-13; see also Anna Williams, *The Divine Sense: Intellect in Patristic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 165-7.

²⁵⁴ Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds*, 122.

²⁵⁵ Luigi Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 13.

²⁵⁶ See Charry's explanation and critique of Rahner, La Cugna, and Gunton, which begins on page 125 of *By the Renewing of Your Minds*. Michael Hanby also criticizes these three in *Augustine and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 13-18.

Himself from ordinary life. Related to La Cugna's contention that the psychological analogies promote an unhealthy individualism is the accusation that they outline a characteristically Neo-Platonic ascent or 'exercise of the mind', which involves "training in modes of thinking increasingly 'interior', and increasingly free from [the senses] and images."²⁵⁸

Interpreted in the aforementioned ways, Augustine's teaching on the psychological analogies is said to anticipate the 'turn to the subject' that took place in the thought of Descartes and Kant and has since fallen into disrepute as a result of the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and others.²⁵⁹ In making such a turn, Descartes, and incipiently, Augustine, promoted the notion that the human subject is the adequate and autonomous foundation for all knowledge, as opposed to a cognitive participant in an objective order founded by God. When the intellect reflects upon itself, it gains access to *a priori* ideas that act as rules for infallibly true and certain judgment, ideas which come from God and therefore provide 'ontological' proof for His existence.

The chief advocate of the argument for continuity between Augustinian interiority and Cartesian subjectivity is Charles Taylor, though there are many other proponents of his thesis.²⁶⁰ According to Taylor, nothing evidences Augustine's affinity to Cartesian subjectivity and solipsism so much as his psychological analogies to the Trinity.²⁶¹ It is no exaggeration, in his view, to say that Augustine "bequeathed inwardness to the Western tradition of thought."²⁶²

In recent years, Augustine has been cleared of all such accusations against the second half of his treatise on the Trinity. The researches of several scholars in particular have confirmed that Augustine successfully accomplished exactly what he

²⁵⁷ Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds*, 124.

²⁵⁸ Lewis Ayres, "The Christological Context of Augustine's *De Trinitate* 13," 114.

²⁵⁹ Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity*, 6, 135.

²⁶⁰ Charles Taylor, "In Interiore Homine," in *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Gareth B. Matthews, *Thought's Ego in Augustine and Descartes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Stephen Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); see also Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 50-101.

²⁶¹ Charles Taylor, "In Interiore Homine," 135.

had been accused of failing to do. The latter half of *De Trinitate*, “far from being responsible for a move towards individualism in anthropology and abstract theism in theology,”²⁶³ actually subverts such trends.²⁶⁴ Augustine does not segregate Trinitarian theology from the economy of salvation or from real life, much less advocate a natural theology. To the contrary, theology is for him “nothing other than a teasing out of what it is to be converted and to come to live in Christ.”²⁶⁵ “Books eight through fifteen of *De Trinitate* are most accurately characterized as a consideration of the process...of reformation or redemption.”²⁶⁶ The psychological analogies are “more than a series of approximating models; they are a description of the route to the knowledge of God.”²⁶⁷ They present a “plan to reform the self through the economy of salvation that discloses...the being of God.”²⁶⁸ By following that plan, a person learns that s/he is in the best position to enjoy life when s/he prefers the Triune God to other goods.

On the basis of arguments like these, I have tried to explain in greater detail what Augustine’s plan for conforming the intellect to God’s image entails. The motivation for doing this was to grasp exactly how Augustine understands the mechanics of cognition, so as to be able to determine how divine illumination features in them.

Divine Illumination

In both *De Trinitate* and *De genesi*, Augustine invokes illumination to illustrate

²⁶² Ibid., 131.

²⁶³ Luigi Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 16.

²⁶⁴ John Milbank argues this in, “Sacred Triads: Augustine and the Indo-European Soul,” *Modern Theology* 13:4 (1997): 451-74, as do Lewis Ayres and Rowan Williams in the works mentioned in following two footnotes. Michael Hanby’s *Augustine and Modernity* offers the definitive response on this issue.

²⁶⁵ Rowan Williams, “De Trinitate,” 850. See also his article titled, “The Paradoxes of Self-Knowledge in the *De Trinitate*,” in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine: Presbyter factus sum* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 121-134.

²⁶⁶ Lewis Ayres, “The Discipline of Self-Knowledge in Augustine’s *De Trinitate* Book X,” in *The Passionate Intellect* (Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University, 1995), 264.

²⁶⁷ Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 75; Luigi Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 232-97.

²⁶⁸ Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds*, 132.

the work of the human intellect.²⁶⁹ These references invite the reader to interpret the account of knowledge that is presented in earlier works like *De magistro* and *Soliloquia* in a larger theological context. In this section, I will summarize the passages of the dialogues relevant to the discussion of divine illumination and show how they can be retrospectively read in that context.

In *De magistro*, Augustine recounts a dialogue between himself and his son Adeodatus concerning the nature of signs and the possibility of teaching and learning using signs, especially words. Towards the end of the discussion, the father and son conclude that it is impossible to teach solely by means of signs. A teacher can create an environment conducive to comprehending signs and can stimulate the student to attend to the realities the signs signify. Yet the teacher's efforts merely create the potential to learn the meaning of signs, inasmuch as a teacher is unable to impress ideas upon a student that is unwilling or incapable of understanding them. There is only so long a teacher can work with an incompliant student, and it is only a matter of time until such a student rejects the teacher.²⁷⁰

A willing and capable learner, by contrast, is in a position to benefit from the teacher's guidance and expertise. When the teacher calls upon such a student to draw a conclusion about the meaning of signs that are unknown on the basis of s/he does know, the student can give a response. Furthermore, s/he can comprehend the teacher's own interpretation of the signs. In light of all this, Augustine and Adeodatus reiterate that the efficacy of teaching is just as contingent upon the teachable spirit of the student as it is on the skill of the teacher.

In the second part of the dialogue, Augustine follows up on the foregoing by claiming that divine illumination prepares one to learn and therefore enacts the possibility of both teaching and learning. There, he speaks of Christ as the inner Teacher, the light all consult to gain understanding.²⁷¹ Christ, Augustine states, both

²⁶⁹ Augustine, *Gn. litt.*, vol. 2, 12.29.57, 12.30.58, 12.31.59; *trin.*, 9.6.9 (CCL 50, 301); 10.1.2 (CCL 50, 312-15); 12.15.24 (CCL 50, 377-9); 14.7.9 (CCL 50A, 433-4); 15.25.44 (CCL 50A, 523); 15.27.49-50 (CCL 50A, 530-3).

²⁷⁰ Idem., *mag.*, 12 (CCL 29, 196-9).

²⁷¹ Ibid., 11 (CCL 29, 194-6).

bestowed “the light of the mind by His enlightening act”²⁷² at creation and reminded that the light was dwelling within at His Incarnation.²⁷³ Because of His illumination, human minds may continually experience the enlightening action of God from within.²⁷⁴

The contemporary reader, removed from Augustine’s intellectual context, can surely find reason to conclude that illumination is an extrinsic force upon reading these statements at face value. There is ample evidence in them to bolster the belief that Augustine thinks human teaching and learning are possible only because Christ effectively sets Himself up as an ‘external’ internal teacher, who communicates whatever is taught by a human teacher, either by impressing ideas on the intellect innately or ontologically or by performing cognitive work on behalf of the mind.

An evaluation of *De magistro* that takes the context of Augustine’s mature theological treatises into consideration, however, precludes such concepts of Christ’s illuminating work. That context-attentive reading highlights Augustine’s belief that what Christ illumines is simply the Triune nature of God. Augustine had already hinted in this direction in the *Soliloquia*, where he speaks of God as “the intelligible Light, from whom and through whom and in whom all things intelligibly shine.”²⁷⁵ Just as there are three things in the sun, “that it is, that it shines, and that it illumines,” he writes, “so also in that most hidden God there are three things, namely, that He is, that He is known, and that He makes other things to be known.”²⁷⁶ In making these claims, Augustine speaks obliquely of the three Persons of the Trinity that the Person of Jesus Christ revealed as He illumined God’s Triune nature. He suggests, moreover, that the doctrine of the Trinity is required to enact the account of knowledge by illumination the Platonists espoused.

²⁷² Idem., *Epistle 147 (The Book of the Vision of God)*, trans. Sister Wilfrid Parsons in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 20 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953), ch. 45.

²⁷³ Idem., *mag.*, 14 (CCL 29, 202-3).

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 12 (CCL 29, 196-9).

²⁷⁵ Augustine, *sol.*, 1.1.3: *Deus intellegibilis lux, in quo et a quo et per quem intellegibiliter lucent, quae intellegibiliter lucent omnia.*

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 1.8.15: *Nam et terra visibilis et lux; sed terra nisi luce inlustrata videri non potest. Ergo et illa, quae in disciplines traduntur, quae quisquis intellegit verissima esse nulla dubitatione concedit, credendum est ea non posse intellegi, nisi ab alio quasi suo sole inlustrantur.*

When the Person of Christ illumined God's Triune nature, He simultaneously revealed the image of the Trinity on all human persons. As *the* image of the Trinity, He demonstrated that reflecting the image means expressing the spirit for the purpose of illuminating the nature of the Father. When He illumined His image on human beings, therefore, Christ awakened the minds that are receptive in faith to the realization that they were designed to illumine the Father through the expression of the mind (*animus* = spirit) itself, as Christ did. What Christ made known, in other words, was that the intrinsic intellectual ability human beings have to illumine reality is truly an ability to illumine God, who gave that ability so that human beings could use it however they willed, so long as they willed to glorify God.

When human beings ceased to will this end at the fall, they lost the ability to teach and learn from one another, inasmuch as a commonality of will is the prerequisite for interpersonal communication. If Augustine contends that it is impossible to teach and learn apart from the illumination of Christ, it is not because Christ is needed to act as an 'external' internal teacher of the mind. To suggest that this is the role Augustine posits for him in the last part of *De magistro* would be to defeat the whole purpose of first part, which was to establish that there is very little someone on the outside can do to directly impose ideas on a student; the initiative to learn must come from the student.

In illumining humanity, Christ did not put himself in such an impossible position. Rather, he empowered human beings to put themselves in a position to communicate with one another when He relayed that those with divergent wills to learn ought to will whatever they will in accordance with His will to glorify the Father. By conveying this, Christ revealed how those with diverse wills could unite themselves in one will, so as to learn from one another. He did not suspend normal patterns of teaching and learning. Instead, He reinstated them.

Although the above has made it clear that Christ illumines human minds to the knowledge that the proper use of their intrinsic intellectual ability is to illumine the nature of God by bringing faith in Him to bear on acts of knowing, it remains to show how the statements Augustine makes in *De magistro* which imply that Christ's

illumination gives cognitive content, plays a part in the process of cognition, and provides cognitive certitude are to be interpreted.

De Genesi made it unmistakably clear that the sources of human knowledge are empirical, and thus rendered the opinion that Christ directly imposes the sensible or intelligible content of knowledge untenable. Admittedly, Augustine denies that it is possible to derive ideas from the incessantly changing sense realm and insists that this can only be accomplished by the intellect.²⁷⁷ Yet neither the wholesale rejection of sense knowledge nor adherence to a theory of innate ideas is implicit in this claim, which is made to establish the point that the sense perceptive faculties are themselves unfit to perform the characteristically intellectual work of forming ideas. Although human beings perceive things through the bodily senses, Augustine explains that, “they do not judge them by the senses.”²⁷⁸ This is the task of higher reason, the proper work of which is intelligible ideas. In virtue of the fact that those ideas are not sensible, even if they are formed on the basis of empirical data, they can permanently determine the nature and extent of the mind’s knowledge of God.

When higher reason is informed by faith in God as the Highest Good, concepts about reality are formed under the auspices of this belief. Although the perspective that is shaped by faith reveals nothing about God Himself since it bears on created realities, it doubles as the knowledge of God that is attainable in this life, inasmuch as it is affected by belief in Him.²⁷⁹ That perspective, which represents the ‘indirect’ vision of God, whets the appetite of the mind for the direct vision of Him that is to be enjoyed in the life to come and motivates the intellect to continue striving towards it as it currently can, namely, by maintaining a perspective on the world that is informed by faith.

Such perspective is attained when the ideas the mind comes to entertain are formed through the use of the intellect the Son imparted, which is the manifestation

²⁷⁷ Augustine, *div. qu.* 9.

²⁷⁸ Idem., *civ.*, 11.27 (CCL 48, 347): *Sed nos ea sensu corporis ita capimus, ut de his non sensu corporis iudicemus. Habemus enim alium interioris hominis sensum isto longe praestantiorum, quo iusta et iniusta sentimus, iusta perintelligibilem speciem, iniusta per eius privationem.*

²⁷⁹ Idem., *beata v.*, 4.35 (CCL 29, 84).

of the human spirit, on the assumption that the Father is ultimate. Since God the Father eternally knows Himself through the Son and in the Spirit, He pre-contains though He does not predetermine all the ideas humans conceive in the same way, and through which He permits them to participate at their own initiative and of their own accord in an eternal life that consists in knowing the idea of God.

Inasmuch as the intellect forms its ideas through the Son in a spirit that seeks to glorify the Father, the illumination of Christ has an ongoing effect in the cognitive process. The cognitive process, conversely, replays the events of His life, death, and resurrection, such that His work is ‘remembered’ in every human act of knowing. Still, Christ does not directly instigate or interfere with the cognitive process, for this is accomplished by the human spirit that works in His Spirit and makes His illumination effective by stoking rather than extinguishing His light through the dispositions of the will.²⁸⁰

Evaluated in this way, Christ’s illumination comes into relief as an intrinsic, empowering, and indirect, as opposed to extrinsic, interfering, and direct, one. His influence does not force but free the human spirit to gesture towards the Father as it wills. If illumination is ineffective or goes unacknowledged, it is not the fault of Christ but of the one whose spirit refuses to work in His Spirit that exalts the Father.

The prevalent ignorance of the light, Augustine states, is owing to the fact that God the Father inhabits light inaccessible, and the eyes of human minds have been darkened by the fallen notion that corporeal images are all-encompassing lights by which to judge the world.²⁸¹ In discussing illumination in *Soliloquia*, Augustine states that faith opens or cleanses the eyes of the mind, converting them from darkness to the light of the realization that the mind is created in God’s image in order to know like God, and eventually, to know God.²⁸² Initial conversion to faith in God raises the intellect’s awareness of its creation in God’s image and initiates the process of conforming to the image.

²⁸⁰ Idem., *trin.*, 14.14.18 (CCL 50A, 445-6).

²⁸¹ Idem., *ep.* 147, ch. 37.

²⁸² Idem., *sol.*, 1.6.12-13.

Augustine explains that the preliminary cleansing involves acknowledging that God is not represented by any of the corporeal images of heaven and earth.²⁸³ The initial purification of the eyes teaches the mind to believe that the “interior eyes are judges of the exterior ones” and that “the former [should be preferred] to the latter.”²⁸⁴ To have clean eyes, in other words, is to affirm that none of the things that are or will be seen by the light is the light itself. The light itself is God, and although traces of Him can be found everywhere, He is contained nowhere.

Although the opening or cleansing of the eyes through faith instigates the process of the mind’s conversion to the light, it does not at once adjust them to the light. The image of God on the mind is still an effaced one, or as Augustine elaborates in *Soliloquia*, the all-encompassing Light of God is too bright for those whose limited concepts of goodness and light make them unaccustomed to it. For this reason, the newly illumined are forced to assume a ‘bent over’ (*incurvatus se*) cognitive position, to bow the head and cover the eyes for protection.

In order to stand upright and actually see the world in the light of faith, Augustine exhorts the illumined to invite the influence of more illumination, which is to undergo the renewal of the image of God.²⁸⁵ The eyes of the mind adjust to the vision of the world at ever higher, more inclusive grades of light by judging whatever can be seen under the level of light they are able to bear. Judging by the light means cultivating the habit of acknowledging that nothing that is seen by the light is itself an all-consuming light by which to judge the world. The light by which all things are perceived and distinguished is not diffused in any one place.²⁸⁶

The low grade of light at which the mind initially sees results in narrow-minded judgments, since darkness excludes what light subsumes and rightly includes. Dimness of vision prevents the mind from grasping fully that the ‘unspeakable and incomprehensible light of minds’ encompasses far more than the light of one outlook ever could, from seeing that there is more than one road to

²⁸³ Idem., *conf.*, 10.6.10 (CCL 27, 160).

²⁸⁴ Idem., *ep.* 147, ch. 41.

²⁸⁵ On gradual conversion to the light see *conf.* 13.22 (CCL 27, 253-4); *ord.* 1.8.23 (CCL 29, 99-102).

²⁸⁶ Idem., *Epistle 120*, trans. Sister Wilfrid Parsons in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 18 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953).

wisdom and allowing others to guide and be guided towards that light “according to their health and endurance.”²⁸⁷ Darkened vision, in summary, makes the mind unsure about what can be subsumed under the light, fostering aversions and fears and inhibiting one’s ability to confidently navigate the world in the light of the knowledge that there is a place for everything in it in the divine order, and thus to identify God’s goodness in all things.

Augustine urges those responsible for teaching others to see reality by that light to begin to do so at the level that the newly illumined eyes are able to handle, and not a shade brighter, lest the student become afraid and abandon the effort to make progress in illumination. Some that have “eyes so healthy and vigorous that they can fearlessly turn towards the sun as soon as they are opened,”²⁸⁸ Augustine says, should not be held back by their teachers, but only cautioned against pride. Others with weaker eyesight must gradually adjust to the light if they are to grow comfortable manoeuvring in it. They must see what they can see at a bearable grade of light. That experience, according to Augustine, leads naturally to vision at a higher degree of illumination, for it is impossible to forget what it was like to come to see more clearly and to realize where vision remained obscure.

The maintenance of an ‘illumined’ outlook cannot allow the mind to stay in the dimness of light forever if the mind faithfully adheres to the knowledge that the light includes all things but is reduced to none. The contrast between darkness and light trains the eyes of the mind to move, by trial and error, out of darkness and into brighter levels of light that dispel the shadows that prevent the realization that the light is an all-inclusive one, in which a greater share can be gained as one learns from others and from all circumstances how that light operates.²⁸⁹ Each time the intellect attempts to judge in the light, it cultivates the habit of doing so, undergoing the renewal of God’s image and bringing that blurry image into clearer focus. The eyes of the mind, in sum, become better accustomed to the light of God.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Idem., *sol.*, 1.13.23: *nam sunt nonnulli oculi tam sani et vegeti, qui se, mox ut aperti fuerint, in ipsum solem sine ulla trepidatione convertant. His quodammodo ipsa sanitas dux est nec doctore indigent, sed sola fortasse admonitione.*

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

As the intellect forms a habit of viewing reality in the light of faith, it realizes the benefits of adhering to faith and therefore grows more confident in the faith. Growth in certainty with respect to the belief in God is therefore accompanied by a proportional increase in certitude as regards the knowledge of the nature of reality. Certainty that arises as a result of having formed a habit of seeing in the light doubles as the confidence in the Light Itself that remains unseen yet will be seen by the eyes that adjust to it.²⁹⁰

It is by learning to use one's ability to see in the light in one's own way and at one's own pace, Augustine affirms, that "each one according to his strength, grows more proficient...and [prepares to] sooner or later behold the sun without flinching and with immense delight."²⁹¹ As the mind improvingly realizes that there is a place for all things under the common light, Augustine explains, the head is lifted by degrees and the hands drawn away from the eyes until the illumined stands upright with arms outstretched and sees all that surrounds under the constant ray of divine light that exposes the distinctive purpose and worth of all things. Augustine calls attention to the fact that the human person that assumes this cognitive position poises like Christ who accomplished the redemption of mankind on the cross and is thus restored to His image, or re-enabled to constantly reflect it.²⁹²

Postured with eyes and heart and mind and arms wide open, the constantly illumined intellect reactivates the freedom of the will to manoeuvre the world without the inhibitions of fallen attitudes like narrow-mindedness and fear which formerly tainted the light of the mind, and to find the good in any circumstance, furthering the redemptive work of Christ in the same instance.²⁹³ Although circumstances may change, Augustine insists the illumined perspective on them need not shift any more than the Son's steady gaze upon the Father in the Spirit. Changes in circumstance, far from disquieting the steadily illumined outlook, can only

²⁹⁰ Idem., *beata v.*, 4.35 (CCL 29, 84-5).

²⁹¹ Idem., *sol.*, 1.13.23: *in quibus seu citius seu tardius, sive per totum ordinem sive quibusdam contemptis, pro sua quisque valetudine adsuescens sine trepidatione et cum magna voluptate solem videbit.*

²⁹² Idem., *ep.* 140, ch. 26.

²⁹³ Idem., *conf.*, 13.20.2 (CCL 27, 256-7); *ep.* 147, ch. 44.

broaden the scope of illumined judgment.²⁹⁴

On Augustine's account, the capacity to put all things into a perspective that identifies the good in them—and thus to 'redeem' them—is the locus of the persuasive power of the Christian faith in the Triune God the Incarnate Christ revealed.²⁹⁵ Faithful and faithless thinkers alike can only observe the truth of Christian doctrines in their effects. Furthermore, the effects of the doctrines can only be identified by the human mind that is affected by them and is competent to give an account of what is affected by—the Triune God—and how—the Incarnation of Christ. To convince anyone that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge, Augustine emphasizes, one can only persuade in the way Christ Himself modelled: not by shining the light of faith in the eyes of those who reason in the dark but by showing how effective it is to see reality and walk through it in the light that fosters fellowship with others.

While Augustine admits that all minds are illumined inasmuch as they are put to work, he believes that it is only those that can name the unseen source of the Light and give an account of its coming into the world that can be properly called illumined. Although he affirms that pagan thinkers like the Platonists, and even the Stoics and sceptics, are illumined to the degree they employed the intellectual faculty for 'seeking oneness', he notes that they lack awareness of the Triune God as the unity they seek.

Those cognizant of their illumination have the power to appropriate into their perspective the views of those who are unwittingly illumined, as Augustine did through his use of Platonist, Stoic, and sceptic ideas, because they know the light that encompasses all. The reverse, however, does not always hold true. Those who are not aware of the all-inclusive nature of the light, that reduce it to some finite light, may struggle to be receptive to different or opposing outlooks. The resources to embrace and redeem all that surrounds, to foster conversation amongst those with different perspectives, are unique to the Christian faith. Augustine's outline of the cognitive process involved in conforming to God's image in *De Trinitate*

²⁹⁴ Idem., *ord.*, 1.8.25 (CCL 29, 101).

²⁹⁵ Idem., *trin.*, 15.3-8 (CCL 50A, 462-7).

particularly, which is illustrated by the metaphor of illumination to which he appeals all throughout his writings, is designed to teach the reader how to put those resources to use.

The metaphor of illumination as it has been explained here is a metaphor for the intrinsic cognitive capacity God gives all human beings. As such, illumination theory evades the problems typically associated with extrinsic interpretations of it. Those interpretations have not done justice to the later developed theological context of the account Augustine most famously mentions in early ‘philosophical’ works. The study that has been undertaken here has implicitly indicated that there is a great deal of thematic continuity between those early works and the treatise on the Trinity; the latter may even be the mature expression of the speculations on the relationship between faith and reason Augustine made in his dialogues. Most importantly for the present purposes, however, the inquiry into Augustine’s treatise on Genesis and above all on the Trinity has thrown into relief the logic of his claim that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge.

II. ANSELM

(1033-1109)

Introduction

Thus far, I have shown that Augustine regarded illumination as an illustration of the cognitive process involved in conforming to the image of God. By adhering to illumination, he affirmed, the mind learns to regard every situation in light of the knowledge that happiness does not depend upon temporal circumstances, but is found in the eternal God. Through the time of Anselm of Canterbury, it would appear that Western scholars tended to assume Augustine's theological outlook. For this reason, his theory of knowledge was commonly considered intelligible and authoritative. In fact, it was Augustine's concept of knowledge that carried early Medieval thinkers through the tumultuous period between the death of Augustine in 430 and the birth of Anselm in 1033.

During the last years of his life, Augustine composed his *De civitate dei* while he watched the Roman Empire enter into the initial stages of its decline. In that treatise, the bishop exhorts his readers to bear in mind that the 'city of God' will not come to the same end as the 'city of man' in which it is presently situated, and he encourages them to face the trials of the times with that truth in view. He urges them, in short, to maintain an illumined outlook on reality. In the years surrounding Augustine's death, Roman territories were repeatedly invaded by barbarian groups. As the conquerors divided the vast realm amongst themselves, they tended to undermine political and economic stability and decentralize learning. The social upheaval that resulted is a major reason why the six centuries intervening between Augustine and Anselm have been referred to as 'dark ages'.

As Augustine had predicted, however, the darkness did not prevail in the city of God. If anything, the uncertain times threw the constancy of the divine light into sharper relief. Late antique Roman statesman such as Boethius and Cassiodorus testified that an illumined outlook enabled them to negotiate volatile political

circumstances and face the challenges posed by rulers that opposed their faith.²⁹⁶

The sixth century Pope Gregory the Great admitted to relying on illumination in his efforts to bring stability to the institutional Church. Additionally, he preached a message of illumination. In his *Magna moralia*, Gregory calls the faithful to shine like stars in the dark times and patiently wait for the dawn of God.²⁹⁷ Following Augustine, he instructs his readers to repent of placing their hope in the present life. On his account, this attitude of ‘compunction’ renders the ‘inner man’ receptive to the light of God that puts the external circumstances the ‘outer man’ faces into perspective.²⁹⁸

In his hagiographical writings, Gregory presents St. Benedict as the model of an illumined mindset.²⁹⁹ He recounts a vision in which Benedict perceived the whole world gathered under one brilliant beam of light, which showed him how to manage great challenges and serve others facing them. In 529, Benedict had founded his first monastic community. Most of the many abbeys that were opened across the Western world between 550 and 1150, and even beyond the original borders of the former Roman Empire, were associated with his order.

In between the regular periods of prayer prescribed by the liturgy of the hours, Benedictine monks pored over the classic works of the Christian tradition, especially those of Augustine. In addition to this, they laboured to support themselves. Through their various economic and agricultural enterprises, the Benedictines came to hold “a prominent position in the social landscape of Europe as landowning corporations, ecclesiastical patrons, and [proponents of] learning.”³⁰⁰ In an era characterized by uncertainty and disunity, the Benedictine abbeys scattered throughout Western Christendom created intellectual, religious, and social continuity. Benedict’s illumined outlook, brought to bear on a grand scale,

²⁹⁶ See the opening line of Boethius’ *De Trinitate* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) and Cassiodorus’ *On the Soul*, trans. James W. Halporn & Mark Vessey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004), *passim*.

²⁹⁷ Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job* (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1844-50), 6.13.

²⁹⁸ Idem., *The Life of St. Benedict*, trans. Terrence G. Kardong (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009), 5.13-14; 6.26-46.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 2.35.

³⁰⁰ C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism* (London: Longman, 1985), 17.

contributed to the preservation and perpetuation of Christian thought and culture in the early Middle Ages.

The light began to return to the city of man around the turn of the ninth century, when Charlemagne was crowned the first Holy Roman Emperor. Under his rule, the West enjoyed a measure of government-driven political and economic stability, which put Charlemagne and his successors in the position to initiate a revival of learning. Charlemagne founded schools based in the local cathedrals, where select members of the clergy received basic training in the liberal arts, Scripture, and the Church Fathers, so as to become more competent administrators of church affairs.³⁰¹ In addition, the Emperor collected for scholarly use the few classical texts that were available in Latin at the time, including Boethius' Latin translation of Aristotle's six logical treatises (*Organon*), Boethius' own philosophical and theological works, and a few works by Cicero and Plato.³⁰² He appointed Alcuin of York as master of the arts for members of his own court, and he commissioned independent scholars to complete new translations, the most important of which was John Scotus Eriugena's Latin version of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius.

Prior to the Carolingian renaissance, scholars working in the monastic setting had focused their intellectual energies on the study of Scripture and the Fathers. That is not to say that they failed to conduct rigorous researches or that they had no training in the liberal disciplines.³⁰³ Even so, with exceptions like Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede, the pursuit of *sapientia* rather than *scientia* was the order of the day.

By the eleventh century, the trends that were set during the Carolingian renaissance had become norms. Scholarly work was undertaken in monasteries as

³⁰¹ G.R. Evans, *Philosophy and Theology in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1993), 17.

³⁰² Other texts available during this period included Porphyry's *Isagogue*, a commentary on Aristotle's *Categoriae*; Boethius' commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagogue*, Aristotle's *De interpretatione* and *Categoriae*, and on Cicero's *Topica*; Boethius' *De consolazione philosophiae* and *Opuscula sacra*; an early Medieval paraphrase of the *Categoriae* known as the *Categoriae decem*, mistakenly attributed for a long time to Augustine; Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* and *Topica*; and Calcidius' fourth-century translation and commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*. Until Henricus Aristippus' translation of the *Meno* and the *Phaedo* in the twelfth century, the *Timaeus* was the only text of Plato available in the Latin West.

³⁰³ John Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre: Logic, Theology, and Philosophy in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2.

well as in cathedral schools and the rapidly proliferating intellectual circles that were sheltered by no institution but were governed by a master of the arts who determined the course of study for his pupils.³⁰⁴ In these schools, there was a growing interest in the liberal arts and philosophy and in the logical or dialectical methods of inquiry that were employed in these disciplines. By Anselm's day, this development had rendered necessary a re-appraisal of the relationship between liberal and Biblical studies, *scientia* and *sapientia*.³⁰⁵ After so long a time on the 'way of authority', as Augustine had called it, eleventh-century scholars faced the challenge of determining what it would mean in their context to take his 'way of reason'.

Naturally, there were those that favoured the use of logic in the study of Scripture as well as those that opposed it to varying degrees. Contrary to what has been supposed for so long, however, the 'dialecticians' did not construe reason as the only source of truth, and the 'anti-dialecticians' did not declare reason superfluous for the purposes of faith.³⁰⁶ As has been shown in the recent past, eleventh-century scholars simply did not operate on the modern conceptual extremes of rationalism and fideism. They commonly affirmed that faith is fundamental and that reason constitutes the very image of God. They only disagreed when it came to deciding where and how to lay the emphasis.³⁰⁷

Through his studies at the Benedictine abbey of Bec, Anselm would have become well versed in Augustine's thought before he succeeded his master Lanfranc as prior there.³⁰⁸ As prior and later abbot, Anselm composed treatises that have been called the most perfect definitions of Augustine's views.³⁰⁹ In the process, he built the abbey's reputation as one of the foremost centres of learning in Europe, until he was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. For these reasons, the monks who were in his care while he was at Bec requested that he explain in light of the

³⁰⁴ G.R. Evans, *Old Arts, New Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁰⁶ Toivo J. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 2. Holopainen challenges the received view espoused by J.A. Endres in *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Frühmittelalterlichen Philosophie* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1915).

³⁰⁷ Toivo J. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 156.

³⁰⁸ See G.R. Evans, "Putting Theory into Practice: Anselm and the Augustinian Model," in *Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 367.

³⁰⁹ Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1938), 23-4.

contemporary controversies how they might come to know God through the use of reason.³¹⁰

In the preface to his *Monologion*, Anselm indicates that his response is effectively an update of the message Augustine communicates over the course of *De Trinitate*.³¹¹ There, Augustine had given a two-fold account of the way to contemplate God. In the first half of the treatise, he explained the message of Scripture that the Incarnate Christ revealed, which is that the Father is the Highest Good, who works all things through the Son in the Spirit. In other words, he explained how to interpret Scripture in a positive sense, how to think about God on the basis of authority.

In the second half, Augustine showed how to apply the doctrine of the Trinity and thus ‘negatively’ interpret Scripture by bringing faith in Christ to bear in efforts to understand reality. Through those efforts, Augustine insisted, one could learn to find the good in all things and to identify experiences of goodness with the work of the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, that is, to know God by means of the reasoning faculty.

According to Augustine, both the way of authority and the way of reason are equally legitimate ways to God, inasmuch as they begin and end with the wisdom that God is the Highest Good, that He is so because He is Triune, and that this is known because He made Himself Incarnate. Even so, Augustine argues that the way of reason, which proceeds from wisdom through science back to wisdom, can be a far more satisfying way to take, inasmuch as the profound depths of the wisdom of God that cannot be fathomed on the way of authority are revealed on that route.

While Anselm’s monks would have been well acquainted with the way of authority, they apparently felt unprepared to give an account of what it would mean to traverse the way of reason. They needed to be reminded of what Augustine had communicated in *De Trinitate*, yet they needed this reminder to come in a new form,

³¹⁰ Anselm, *Monologion*, in *L’oeuvre d’Anselme de Cantorbéry* (French-Latin), vol. 1, ed. Michel Corbin et. al. (Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 1986), preface; all translations taken from, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

³¹¹ Ibid.

which addressed new concerns regarding the place of logic in the study of Scripture. In the main, Augustine had based his arguments on Scripture, but the monks of Bec needed to see that it was both possible and permissible to reach his conclusions rationally.

The *Monologion* was Anselm's attempt to briefly summarize Augustine's *De Trinitate* in new and relevant way.³¹² His way involved making almost no appeal to authoritative sources. Instead of building arguments on the basis Scriptural and patristic texts, Anselm argues by 'reason alone' (*sola ratione*). When discussing the logic behind divine actions, he cites 'necessary reasons' (*rationes necessariae*). When explaining what is proper action for human beings created in God's image, Anselm presents arguments from fittingness (*convenientia*). The only authority Anselm names is Augustine himself, and even the bishop's name appears a mere eight times in six passages, all of which are found in the *Monologion* or *Proslogion* and refer to *De Trinitate*.³¹³ Anselm appealed to what seemed logically necessary or fitting rather than to authority in order to throw the contours and coherence of an Augustinian understanding of the relationship of reason to faith into relief.³¹⁴ In doing this, he told his readers how to take Augustine's negative way by showing them how to do so.

After he had completed the *Monologion*, Anselm was apparently not convinced that he had successfully modernized the message of Augustine's treatise. Although he had satisfactorily given an account of the Triune God and creation in the image of God, he felt he had not provided an adequate formula for conforming to the image of God that worked from reason alone as well. For a long time, Anselm says he considered how to formulate such a formula, to no avail. Just after he had given up on the project, the idea came to him in a flash of insight that disclosed the famous proof for the existence of God he proceeded to outline in the *Proslogion*. In that brief treatise, Anselm completed in his own way the project Augustine had

³¹² Frederick Van Fleteren, "Augustine and Anselm: Faith and Reason," in *Faith Seeking Understanding: Learning and the Catholic Tradition* (Manchester, NH: St. Anselm College Press, 1991), 58.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Coloman Etienne Viola, "Authority and Reason in St. Anselm's Life and Thought," in *Anselm: Aosta, Bec, and Canterbury* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 188-98.

undertaken in the latter half of his *De Trinitate* and which he himself had begun in the *Monologion*.

When I discuss the interpretations of the *Proslogion* that have been offered in the past, I will explain why Anselm's instructions to read that text in relation to Augustine's treatise on the Trinity are virtually never heeded.³¹⁵ Breaking with that trend in the scholarship, the argument of this chapter turns on the contention that, whatever their methodological differences, Anselm's *Monologion* and *Proslogion* and Augustine's *De Trinitate* fall within the same genre of theological-pedagogical literature. Initially, I will support this contention by explaining the way Anselm gives a decidedly Augustinian account of God's nature, His creative work, and the *imago dei* in the *Monologion*, albeit in his own forms of argumentation. Subsequently, I will turn to a number of theological tractates Anselm wrote while archbishop, which delineate the effect of the fall and redemption on the image of God. Juxtaposing the early and late works of Anselm in this manner is a legitimate scholarly move to make, since Anselm did not "change his mind significantly over the course of his career."³¹⁶

Next, I will interpret the *Proslogion* and the famous argument it contains as an account of the process involved in conforming to God's image. Anselm claims to receive his argument in an instant of illumination, and he states that it is designed to help bring about an increase in illumination. On those grounds, I will argue that Anselm presupposes Augustine's view of illumination as an illustration of the process involved in conforming to the image of God. In summary, I will bolster the contention that Anselm remains a traditional Augustinian thinker in virtually all respects, and so also with respect to the theory of knowledge by divine illumination, even as he puts traditional perspectives in different forms of philosophical argumentation.

³¹⁵ J.F. Worthen does suggest that the two texts should be considered together in, "Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Anselm's *Proslogion*," in *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 517-530. Yet he sees the 'interior' journey to God that both Augustine and Anselm outline in the way I suggested is not actually Augustinian in the previous chapter.

³¹⁶ Katherin A. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1.

Trinity

Anselm is remembered as the ‘perfect being’ theologian *par excellence*. As scholars have noticed, however, Anselm appears to have formed his idea for the perfect-being project on the basis of Augustine’s writings, and specifically *De Trinitate*.³¹⁷ The basic premise of perfect-being theology builds on Augustine’s claim that God is the Highest Good that manifests Itself in every good.³¹⁸ According to Anselm, that premise states that, “there is one nature that is supreme. It alone is self-sufficient...Through its all-powerful goodness, It creates and gives to all other things their very existence and their goodness.”³¹⁹

To bolster his belief in the Supreme Good, Anselm argues along the following lines. He first points out that many things exist and exhibit goodness in different ways and to varying degrees. He stresses that none of these things has something in common with all other good things.³²⁰ None, in other words, is an all-inclusive good capable of making and keeping all things good. On those grounds, Anselm argues that all things necessarily derive their being and goodness from something that does not possess properties like being and goodness but is Being and Goodness Itself.³²¹ God is such a maximally perfect being because He, unlike His creatures, does not have His goodness through any other than Himself.

On the assumption that God is identical with goodness, Anselm concludes that His identity never changes, and that He cannot have been brought into existence by another being. God has no beginning and no end. He is eternally the maximally perfect Being.³²² Because He is identical with goodness, Anselm further contends that God is identical with every other good quality one could conceivably name, including justice, existence, reason, truth, greatness, beauty, immortality,

³¹⁷ Brian Leftow, “Anselm’s Perfect-Being Theology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 132. On the perfect-being theology of Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, see Katherin A. Rogers, *Perfect Being Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

³¹⁸ Augustine, *trin.*, 8.2.3-4 (CCL 50, 270-1); see also Augustine’s *De libero arbitrio* 2.15 (CCL 29, 263-5), trans. Anna S. Benjamin and L.H. Hackstaff (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1964).

³¹⁹ Anselm, *Monologion*, 1.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

³²² *Ibid.*, 18.

incorruptibility, immutability, happiness, eternity, power, and unity.³²³ His primary perfection, which is to be all that is and is good at all times, generates and includes all His other good qualities. Those qualities, which human beings tend to perceive as many are actually one, because they are predicated of a Being who is one, inasmuch as He is every perfection eternally, by definition.³²⁴

To summarize, God is one because He is not comprised of various parts. He is not a composite because He does not owe His existence to anything else; and He does not owe His existence to anything else because He is the source of Himself and is therefore identical with Himself. He is simple because He is one thing eternally, and that one thing is the best possible thing to be, which exists supremely.³²⁵

In addition to existing supremely, Anselm elaborates, God knows and loves Himself as the Supreme Being.³²⁶ The references to the self-knowledge and self-love of God lead Anselm to discuss His Triune nature.³²⁷ On Anselm's account, the claim that God loves and knows Himself suggests that there is within the Godhead a knower, a known, and their knowledge, a lover, a beloved, and their love. In order to validate the claim that God knows and loves Himself through Himself, consequently, Anselm insists that He must be described as Triune.

According to Anselm, Triune is precisely what God is. The Father begets the Son, who is the knowledge and love of the Father. What the Son receives and returns to the Father is the Spirit they share, which proceeds from both of them.³²⁸ Because the nature of God is Triune, one may reasonably conclude that there is one God who supremely exists through Himself and who knows and loves Himself as the Supreme Being. For Anselm, acknowledging the distinct roles of the three Persons by no means implies that "there are three knowers, or three lovers, much less three objects of knowledge, or three things loved."³²⁹ The discussion of the three Persons,

³²³ Ibid., 15-16.

³²⁴ Ibid., 17.

³²⁵ Ibid., 28.

³²⁶ Ibid., 48-49.

³²⁷ Ibid., 38.

³²⁸ Ibid., 39, ff.

³²⁹ Ibid., 63

in short, does not suggest there are three gods. To the contrary, it “points up the supreme unity and simplicity of their common nature.”³³⁰

Creation in God's Image

THE NATURAL ORDER

Anselm likens God's creative work to the work of a craftsman. Before he begins a project, a craftsman envisions what he wishes to make. He must form an idea in order to pattern something after it.³³¹ Similarly, Anselm writes, God preconceived the idea for the natural order He wanted to bring into existence. Unlike the craftsman, who draws on external resources to accomplish his task, however, God is the prime, sole, and sufficient cause of His creation. When He eternally thinks Himself, He thinks all He needs to know in order to create.

According to Anselm, the divine thought of one in three, simplicity in diversity, is the idea that serves as the exemplar for the creation of all things.³³² Although there are many different kinds of beings that appear to have been formed in accordance with many different exemplars, Anselm, who draws his inspiration from Augustine's account of the eternal reasons, argues that the many forms of being conform to a single form of being, which is the divine form of being one thing in virtue of the involvement of various elements.

All creatures exhibit simplicity analogous to His inasmuch as the essence God gives each creature unifies its component parts, makes it the limited being it is, and enables it to perform a particular function.³³³ Whatever function a creature naturally performs is what Anselm calls its truth. He also speaks of a being's truth or proper behaviour as its 'rectitude' or 'correctness'.³³⁴ Truth, for him, is not an object but an action, which can be performed to greater and lesser extents. In Anselm's scheme, therefore, truth is not something fixed but something that admits of gradual growth.

³³⁰ Ibid., 44.

³³¹ Ibid., 11.

³³² Ibid., 9.

Each being was created with the potential to instantiate a certain type of truth, which it has not yet fully instantiated, but which its nature dictates that it ought to instantiate. As the creature performs its proper function, it participates in its truth and so approximates the truth that it is fitting for it to be. Through persistent existence, in other words, it approaches its essence. Inasmuch as any true thing has not yet reached its total truth at any point in time, it is bound to be ‘false’ in some respects. In Anselm’s view, however, falsity does not inhibit growth in truth but facilitate it.³³⁵ Only when something ceases to do what it was made to do can it be called patently false.

Anselm regards any level of participation in truth as participation in the one source of Truth that is God. Since He gives all truths the ability to become a particular sort of truth, He pre-contains and makes possible, though He never prevents or compels, all manifestations of truth.³³⁶ Although God is nothing like His creatures, since He is actually and absolutely true while they merely have the potential to become a limited truth, and He is not therefore analogous to those beings that are analogous to Him, creatures can still be said to indirectly disclose His Truth inasmuch as they manifest their own. While His simple nature is not discernible in itself, it can be seen at all places and at all times through the simplicity exhibited by created beings.³³⁷

In Anselm’s participatory metaphysical scheme, a creature is more a closely analogous to the supreme nature the more it participates in its own nature. In addition to the degrees of participation within classes of being, however, there are levels of participation determined in accordance with the classes themselves, where the higher classes are said to participate in more of the various aspects of the divine life. Since “the supreme nature does not just exist but also lives, senses, and is rational in its own unique way,”³³⁸ Anselm affirms that living natures should be ranked above the non-living, perceptive above non-perceptive, and rational above

³³³ On Anselm’s understanding of analogy, see Richard Campbell’s article titled, “Anselm’s Background Metaphysics,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33: 4 (1980): 327.

³³⁴ Anselm, *De veritate*, in *L’oeuvre d’Anselme de Cantorbery*, vol. 2 (1986), 2.

³³⁵ Richard Campbell, “Anselm’s Background Metaphysics,” 335.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid., 14.

non-rational on the hierarchy of being.³³⁹ To summarize, creatures are more like God the more they do as He does, because this situates them closer to His Truth.

Anselm's account of truth has led many of his scholarly readers to regard him as a 'realist' in an allegedly Platonic and Augustinian sense.³⁴⁰ Platonic realism or essentialism supposedly entails the notion that objective forms independently exist in the mind of God. These forms or exemplars as Anselm calls them are the totalized archetypes after which instantiations are copied. Because creatures are copies of fixed exemplars, there is a univocal relationship between the two.³⁴¹ In other words, creatures have the exact same features as their patterns in the Creator's mind.³⁴² On these grounds, Anselm has been described as one of the first and foremost proponents of a correspondence theory of truth. To many readers, the references to truth as 'rectitude' and 'correctness' clearly imply that Anselm adheres to such a theory.³⁴³

In response to this view, others have stressed the significance of Anselm's description of "truth is something which is done."³⁴⁴ Since Anselm defines truth in this way, it is argued that correctness cannot denote complete correspondence to an exemplary object. Rather, it must indicate action towards the objective of becoming a certain kind of truth. Inasmuch as Anselm defines truth as an action rather than an object, he cannot be classed as a proto-modern metaphysician of 'presence' as his realist readers do, but as a traditional Medieval metaphysician of 'participation', where participation is defined as a creature's participation in behaviour that is fitting or true to its essence.³⁴⁵ Anselm's theory of truth actually precludes the possibility of a total correlation between an instance and exemplar of truth, because God is the Exemplar of exemplars, and His fullness cannot be grasped until He reveals His

³³⁸ Anselm, *Monologion*, 31.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Marilyn McCord Adams, "Was Anselm a Realist? *The Monologium*," *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971): 5-14; Y. Iwakuma, "The Realism of Anselm and His Contemporaries," in *Anselm: Aosta, Bec, and Canterbury*, 120-35.

³⁴¹ See Katherin A. Rogers, *The Neo-Platonic Metaphysics and Epistemology of Anselm of Canterbury* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), ch. three on "The Relationship of Divine Ideas to Creatures."

³⁴² Ibid., 185.

³⁴³ See Jasper Hopkins & Herbert Richardson, *Anselm of Canterbury: Truth, Freedom, and Evil* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965).

³⁴⁴ Richard Campbell, "Anselm's Background Metaphysics," 325.

Truth and therefore reveals what all true things were made to be and indeed already are in the sight of the Truth that sees Itself.³⁴⁶

THE HUMAN BEING

According to Anselm, human beings have a unique way of being true. They are true by knowing what is true. Anselm refers to the knowledge of truth as ‘justice’. Justice is “the rectitude perceptible by the mind alone.”³⁴⁷ Human beings were created to know what is just so that they might ‘preserve justice’ or the proper order amongst true things. Since God is the one who ordered creation, He *is* Justice. The human ability to maintain a just order therefore represents an ability to see reality from His perspective and to ultimately see Him. If Anselm locates human beings on the top of the hierarchy of being, it is because they alone are fit to know God and govern what He has made.³⁴⁸

Since it is not presently possible “to see anything about the supreme nature by means of what is proper to it,”³⁴⁹ but only through that which is ‘not God’, and because that which is other than God yet most closely resembles His nature is the rational nature, Anselm echoes Augustine’s conclusion that, “the efficacy of the mind’s ascent to knowledge of the supreme nature is in direct proportion to the enthusiasm of its intent to learn about itself.”³⁵⁰ What the rational creature must know about itself is that it is an image of the Triune God who knows and loves Himself.³⁵¹ When the rational being knows itself as an image of the Trinity, it knows that what it ought to do, what it is indebted by its very nature to do, is to know and love God.³⁵²

Because God is an eternal God, Anselm infers that human beings were made to know and love Him without ceasing.³⁵³ In the present life, he holds that they can participate in their eternal life by “loving the supreme essence above all other

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 334.

³⁴⁶ Anselm, *De veritate*, 10-13.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 12.

³⁴⁸ Idem., *Monologion*, 66.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 67.

³⁵² Ibid., 68.

goods,”³⁵⁴ or by “loving other things for the sake of the supreme essence.”³⁵⁵ It is fitting for rational beings to prioritize the love of God above other loves, because He is good through Himself while everything else is good through Him. When reason judges reality under the influence of belief that God is the Supreme Good, it can see “the difference between the just and the unjust, the true and the untrue...the good, the less good, and the no good.”³⁵⁶ In sum, it can see created goods in their proper place, as God sees them, and can therefore know God ‘by negation’, that is, by evaluating what it can see with faith in what it cannot see.³⁵⁷

On Anselm’s account, the rational nature is comprised of two elements, which enable it to preserve justice, namely, the intellect and the will. Anselm compares the relationship between the intellect and the will to the power of seeing and the direction of the gaze. While the intellect has the power of preserving justice, the will dictates the manner in which this is done. The intellect has the aptitude, but the will possesses the desire to exercise the aptitude.³⁵⁸ Because each one satisfies the condition of possibility of the other’s operation, neither the intellect nor the will is the whole of the rational nature. The whole simply is the cooperative work of the intellect and the will. These three elements—the intellect, the will, and the cooperation of the two—confirm to Anselm’s mind the status of human beings as images of the Trinity.

Through the cooperative efforts of the intellect and the will, Anselm thinks the rational being is able to broaden the scope of its just perspective and reflect the image of God each time this happens. Anselm describes the manner in which the just perspective expands in the following way. The will that wills what leads to the happiness of knowing God incites the intellect to judge in a just manner.³⁵⁹ When the intellect judges justly, it proceeds from what is known to the knowledge of what was formerly unknown.³⁶⁰ Since the intellect that performs this act desires God, the

³⁵³ Ibid., 69.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 68.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Idem., *De veritate*, 3.

³⁵⁸ Idem., *De Concordia*, in *L’oeuvre d’Anselme de Cantorbery*, vol., 5 (1988), 3.11.

³⁵⁹ Idem., *De casu diaboli*, in *L’oeuvre d’Anselme de Cantorbery*, vol, 2, 13.

³⁶⁰ Idem., *De veritate*, 12

act of knowing increases its understanding of what the desired happiness entails. That growth further whets the will's appetite for happiness and motivates it to lead the intellect to judge in accordance with the desire for God, such that the process begins all over again.³⁶¹ By these means, the intellect and the will grow together in faith and desire for God, respectively. They gradually actualize the potential of the rational nature to preserve justice and so prepare it to enter into the presence of Justice, which is the merciful Love of God.

When the rational nature wills to preserve the justice it receives from God, Anselm writes that it wills "what God wants it to will."³⁶² It is in willing what God wants that Anselm believes the rational nature is truly free. In his opinion, these two claims do not contradict one another, where one acknowledges that God willed that human wills should will as they pleased, so long as they did so out of the desire to know Him.³⁶³ Because God willed that natural effects should follow from human choices rather than from His, nothing that is willed or that consequently occurs in the natural order can fall outside the will of God.³⁶⁴ Whatever humankind wills is what God wills, since God willed that human nature should be rational and therefore free.³⁶⁵

When He willed for human beings to possess a rational capacity, Anselm affirms that God bestowed an initial grace upon them, which does not interfere with the exercise of the rational capacity but empower it. Whenever reason is employed for the purpose God intended, that is, with a view to attaining to the knowledge of God, Anselm states that this is made possible by an ongoing divine grace.³⁶⁶ In instances of just judgment, God's grace can be said to produce whatever the rational being produces, since human beings could not reason unless the gift of rationality were given;³⁶⁷ and since reason could not judge what is good unless there were a Good by which to judge.³⁶⁸ Given that God satisfies these two conditions of

³⁶¹ Idem., *De casu diaboli*, 13.

³⁶² Idem., *De libertate arbitrii*, in *L'oeuvre d'Anselme de Cantorbery*, vol. 2, 8.

³⁶³ Idem., *De concordia*, 1.1.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 1.3.

³⁶⁵ Idem., *De conceptu virginali*, in *L'oeuvre d'Anselme de Cantorbery*, vol. 4 (1990), 11.

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 1.7.

³⁶⁷ Idem., *De concordia*, 3.11.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 2.14.

possibility of acting in accordance with human nature, His grace can be said to sustain nature.³⁶⁹ That is not to suggest that grace undermines or directly interferes with the operations of nature, however. For Anselm, who presupposes Augustine's *influentia* model of divine causality, it is to only to affirm that God alone can put human beings in the position to activate the natural capacity He gives them.

Fall

The fall resulted from the failure of the first man and woman to preserve the just order God had given them.³⁷⁰ When they fell, Adam and Eve willed what God did not want them to will. They failed to regard God as the ultimate source of their happiness and chose to believe what was not in fact the case, namely, that something besides God could afford ultimate happiness. In this, they failed to will what would lead them to the happy life God had willed for them.

According to Anselm, the unjust actions of Adam and Eve were not the by-product of the desire for good things but of the *inordinate* desire for good things.³⁷¹ Anselm emphasizes that their injustice did not attach to the actual objects they desired, because injustice can only be associated with a nature that lacks the justice it ought to have, which is a rational nature.³⁷² On his account, the decision to sin was not a decision to exercise the freedom of the rational will but to abandon it, since sin is incompatible with the happiness for which rational beings were destined.

For Anselm like Augustine, sinful choices are not positive ones, even though it is customary to name the effects and acts of the unjust will. Sin is a privation of the good because it does not contribute to but diminish the desire and ability to behave in a manner which is fitting for human beings and which fosters human happiness.³⁷³ Sin reduces happiness because it makes human beings slaves to sinful desires and leaves them powerless not to sin, and thus undermines human

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 2.6.

³⁷⁰ Idem., *De casu diaboli*, 9.

³⁷¹ Idem., *De conceptu virginali*, 4.

³⁷² Ibid., 3.

³⁷³ Ibid., 5.

freedom.³⁷⁴ According to Anselm, every human being that reaches the age of reason is bound to activate the potential to sin with which every human being is born.

Redemption

In virtue of the nature God had given them, human beings owed a debt to themselves and thus to God to be rational, that is, to preserve justice.³⁷⁵ When they failed to do this, justice was nonetheless required of them, since God's will for their lives is unchanging. Not only were human beings still constrained to preserve justice after the fall, but they were also required to restore to themselves the ability to preserve it that they had lost.³⁷⁶ Since they no longer had the ability to do the former, however, they could not do the latter.³⁷⁷

For this reason, Anselm insists that the rational will needed to be restored by the one who originally gave it. Furthermore, it had to be reinstated by the Person of the Trinity through whom it was originally given, that is, the Son. Because He eternally knows the Father through the Spirit, He was under no obligation to die for the loss of the rational will. He alone was free to restore it.³⁷⁸

Though only God the Son could restore the rational will, Anselm reiterates that the restoration needed to be accomplished by a man, since it was man and not God who owed a debt to God.³⁷⁹ This is why God the Son necessarily became a man. On Anselm's account, the Incarnate Son restored the human rational will as He exercised His divine nature through the medium of human nature. There was nothing inherently contradictory about doing this, since human nature was destined to know the divine nature. The Incarnate Son simply activated the potential God put in all human beings.

When He showed how to live by a divine perspective in the created context, He simultaneously made it possible for human beings to do the same once again.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁴ Idem. *De concordia*, 3.12

³⁷⁵ Idem., *Cur Deus Homo*, in *L'oeuvre d'Anselme de Cantorbéry*, vol. 3 (1988), 1.11.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 2.5.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 1.23.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.11.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 2.7.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., 2.18.

Furthermore, He made it possible for them to do this in a fallen world where it is exceedingly difficult to preserve justice.³⁸¹ Through his death on the cross, Christ demonstrated that difficult circumstances can actually facilitate efforts to preserve justice, that there truly is no circumstance that falls outside the will of God, when one evaluates all circumstances on the assumption that they can contribute to accomplishing the purposes of God.³⁸²

Since Christ has already accomplished the redemption of mankind, Anselm like Augustine addresses the question why human beings are not immediately caught up in the vision of God.³⁸³ His response to this query spells out one implication of his claim that God's will never changes. Anselm reminds the reader that God willed for human beings to habitually exercise the rational will of their own volition. Although Christ reinstated the potential to do this, He did not automatically cause human beings to reactivate the potential, because this would have undermined the will of God, who wanted human beings to use their ability as they willed rather than under compulsion.

On this basis, Anselm concludes that human beings remain in the fallen world so that they can become what God originally made them to be as they re-learn the skill of preserving justice they originally utilized automatically. Were they to meet God prior to re-acquiring the skill of recognizing what is just, they would not be able to recognize Him. They could not obtain the eternal life He intended for them to have in heaven unless they had already learned to enjoy happiness on earth. In Anselm's opinion, it is a sign of the magnitude of God's grace that Christ did not actually redeem the whole of humankind as soon as He created the potential for redemption. That grace which God eternally, unchangeably gives is something Anselm believes those striving to learn how to live in it experience in double measure, precisely because they knew what it was like to live without it.

³⁸¹ Idem., *De concordia*, 3.10.

³⁸² Idem., *Cur Deus Homo*, 2.18.

³⁸³ Idem., *De concordia*, 3.9.

Conforming to God's Image

Although Christ reinstates the potential to preserve justice, that potential remains to be actualized by human beings as they re-learn how to reflect God's image. In this section, I contend that the *Proslogion* and the famous proof for God's existence it contains are the conceptual resources Anselm provides readers seeking to re-conform to God's image. Towards this end, I start by summarizing the statements Anselm makes at the very end of the *Monologion* that anticipate the project he undertakes in the twenty-six chapters of the *Proslogion*, the contents of which I will also summarize. After outlining the relevant texts, I will mention some of the major interpretations of Anselm's *Proslogion*. I will explain why an interpretation of the tract that takes the context of Augustine's *De Trinitate* into consideration has not yet been given and will finally offer such an interpretation.

FROM MONOLOGION TO PROSLOGION

When Anselm set out to write the *Monologion*, he apparently had no plans to compose a sequel. As he draws the discussion of God's image to a close in the final chapters of the work, he discusses how to reflect the image. It is one thing to profess belief in the Supreme Being and quite another to live in accordance with faith, he states. To make faith effective, Anselm contends that one must believe the things that are relevant to making progress towards the end of understanding of God.³⁸⁴ One must act like what one says about God is true. Someone who does not do this, Anselm writes, "appears not to believe and possesses a dead faith."³⁸⁵ For this reason, Anselm urges his readers to live by the faith to which they claim to adhere. After he published the *Monologion*, Anselm states he did not feel he had adequately shown his readers how to live in accordance with faith and thus to reflect God's image. He began to search for a single argument that his readers could use in their efforts to live by belief in God.³⁸⁶ He presents the argument he eventually discovered in the *Proslogion*.

³⁸⁴ Idem., *Monologion*, 76.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 78.

³⁸⁶ Idem., *Proslogion*, in *L'oeuvre d'Anselme de Cantorbery*, vol. 1, preface.

THE ARGUMENT OF THE *PROSLOGION*

The *Proslogion* is written as a prayer. In the first chapter of the work, Anselm confesses that his goal in the treatise is to learn how to know God, that is, preserve justice. He acknowledges that he was made to seek God always, in order to eventually see Him.³⁸⁷ The ‘hard and cruel’ consequence of the fall is that he no longer knows how to seek and has therefore also lost the ability to attain that for which he was made.³⁸⁸ He recognizes that God created him in His image so that he might remember, understand, and love God. But he admits that “this image is so effaced and worn away by vice, so darkened by the smoke of sin, that it cannot do what it was made to do unless You renew and reform it.”³⁸⁹

Anselm expresses his heartfelt longing to reach the point of remembering, understanding, and loving God. He discloses his desire for God’s image in him to be reformed so that he can be ready to gaze on the reality of God. In order for these things to happen, however, Anselm acknowledges that he must first re-learn the skill of seeking to know God, which is to begin to seek already, for it is in learning to seek that the image is renewed.³⁹⁰ He thanks God for teaching him that the way to seek is to ‘believe in order to understand’, and he opens the second chapter of the treatise asking God to help him bring his faith to bear on his efforts to acquire understanding. From that point, he proceeds to delineate his famous proof for the existence of God, which is paraphrased below:

1. God is a Being than which none greater can be thought.
2. A Being than which none greater can be thought exists in the mind.
3. There is a difference between existence in the mind and existence in reality, and it is greater to exist in reality than to exist only in the mind.
4. God, a Being than which none greater can be thought, cannot exist only in the mind.
5. For if He existed only in the mind and not in reality, He would not be a Being than which none greater can be thought, which is a contradiction.
6. Therefore, God exists not only in the mind but also in reality.

In chapter three, Anselm elaborates on the second premise of the above argument. He argues that it is not possible to think that God does not exist if one

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 1.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

accepts premise one, according to which God is the Supreme Being. If one professes that He is Supreme, then He necessarily exists in the mind. Since existence in reality is the logical corollary to existence in the mind, one who believes in God should see reality in the light of that belief. It is inconsistent, or foolish, as Anselm states in chapter four, to affirm God's existence in the mind and deny it in reality. While one may think of God as the Highest God, refuse to assent to the truth of that statement, and proceed to deny His existence in reality, one cannot logically assent to the thought of God as Highest Good and deny that thought in reality. To do so is to live a lie, or to negate the truth of what one claims to believe is true.

After he discusses the existence of God, Anselm explores themes related to the essence of God. Chapters five through twelve seem to comprise the first of three sections included in this discussion. In five, Anselm re-affirms that God is whatever it is better to be than not to be.³⁹¹ If one assumes that He exists supremely, Anselm insists, then one can resolve a number of apparent contradictions pertaining to His nature, such as His omnipotence and His inability to sin, His mercy and impassibility, His justice and willingness to let good come to the unjust, and His justice and mercy. In chapter twelve, Anselm sums up the section by reminding the reader that the Supreme Being is all the attributes He is said to have. The attributes are one in Him, so there is no conflict between them. He always and everywhere is what it is best to be.³⁹²

In making the last claim, Anselm transitions into the next cluster of chapters, thirteen through twenty-one, in which he explains the implications of the belief that God is eternal and omnipresent. Because He is not subject to the limitations of space and time but contains all places and times, Anselm testifies, the God who is more than the mind can understand can be indirectly seen at every place and time that can be understood, if those places and times are regarded in the light of the belief that He is the Supreme Being.³⁹³

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 5.

³⁹² Ibid., 18.

³⁹³ Ibid., 14.

At the outset of the last group of chapters, twenty-two through twenty-six, Anselm praises God for being what He is, that is, for eternally existing in exact accordance with His essence, which is all it is to be. Creatures do not exist in such an a-temporal and immutable mode. They come into existence at a point in time. At that point in time, they have not instantiated their essences in full. Those essences are not absolute but finite. Finite beings are comprised of parts. As those parts mature, creatures exist in the mode of existence dictated by their essences and thus approximate those essences. Since their coming into and ongoing existence is altogether contingent, creatures are nothing like God, who is sufficient unto Himself, and who is therefore able, and willing, to give them whatever being they have.³⁹⁴

In concluding, Anselm summons the reader to consider what joy is to be found in the Triune God who is the source of all goods.³⁹⁵ Anyone who learns to consistently love Him above the finite goods He has made will not wander about in a vain search for what cannot fully satisfy but will be able to identify the limited measure of God's goodness that is in all things. The ability to find the good in every circumstance will in turn afford the constant sense of satisfaction, or joy, that is a foretaste of eternal life with God.

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE *PROSLOGION*

There is more literature on the purpose of Anselm's *Proslogion* than one could begin to mention.³⁹⁶ Most of that literature focuses on the second and sometimes also the third chapter of the work. While some interpreters see chapter three as a supplement to the argument of chapter two, others believe it contains a distinct argument.³⁹⁷ The argument chapter two contains is frequently taken to be an

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 24.

³⁹⁶ For a detailed account of major modern interpretations of the ontological argument and objections to it, refer to Graham Oppy's *Ontological Arguments and Belief in God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

³⁹⁷ For examples of the first case, see Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides quaerens intellectum. Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of His Theological Scheme* (London: SCM, 1960); Richard Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1976); Richard La Croix, *Proslogion Two and Three: A Third Interpretation of Anselm's Argument* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); for instances of the second, see Norman Malcolm, "Anselm's Ontological Arguments," *The Philosophical Review* 69:1 (1960): 41-62; C. Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery: A Re-examination of the Ontological Proof for God's Existence* (LaSalle: Open Court, 1965).

a priori proof for the existence of God, an argument that derives proof for the existence of God from the very thought of God, without recourse to revelation or experience. Versions of this interpretation were advocated in the modern period by René Descartes and Gottfried Leibniz, most famously.³⁹⁸

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant became the first to give the name ‘ontological argument’ to that proof which inferred the existence of God from the definition of God, and he questioned the validity of such proofs. His most famous objection was that ‘existence is not a predicate’. That is to say, it adds nothing to the concept of God or any other being to say that it exists. Today, philosophers of religion continue to debate the validity of Anselm’s argument on the assumption that it is an *a priori* proof for God’s existence. Alvin Plantinga and Norman Malcolm have been some of the most well known proponents of ontological arguments; Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell are among the most avid critics.³⁹⁹

In the next two chapters, I will implicitly contend that interpretations and criticisms of Anselm’s argument based on the assumption that is an *a priori* proof are untenable. I will argue this on the grounds that the Arab scholar Avicenna, whose works were not introduced to the Latin West until after Anselm’s death, was the first philosopher to construct an *a priori* proof for the existence of God.⁴⁰⁰ Thirteenth-century Franciscan thinkers appropriated the idea for an *a priori* proof from Avicenna and projected their view of theistic proofs onto Anselm in order to validate it. Theirs is the understanding of theistic proofs as well as Anselm’s argument that has been inherited by modern thinkers.

On my argument, however, Anselm cannot have intended to offer an *a priori* proof. Instead, as he himself testifies, the proof was formulated within the Medieval intellectual tradition founded by Augustine, in which resources for conforming to God’s image were provided. In the past century, theologians and philosophers have

³⁹⁸ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Gottfried Leibniz, *New Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, trans. A. Langley (New York: Macmillan, 1986).

³⁹⁹ Norman Malcolm, “Anselm’s Ontological Arguments,” and Alvin Plantinga, *God and Other Minds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967).

⁴⁰⁰ Herbert A. Davidson, “Avicenna’s Proof of the Existence of God as a Necessarily Existent Being,” in *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 169.

begun to notice that an aprioristic reading of Anselm seems inconsistent with his theological outlook. Karl Barth was one of the first to distinguish Anselm's proof from those offered by Descartes and Leibniz and to point out that the Kantian objections do not apply to it.⁴⁰¹ Barth stressed that Anselm's proof was intended for the faithful. It was designed to render the belief that God is greater than can be thought intelligible to those that already adhere to it. The development of the argument was not an enterprise in natural theology. Incidentally, interpreters of Anselm who believed it was have charged him with separating knowledge of God from 'real life', as Augustine allegedly did with his psychological analogies. In Barth's then uncommon opinion, however, Anselm never supposed he could prove God's existence by reason alone and without recourse to revelation.

Although Barth has been accused of swinging from rationalism to the other extreme of fideism in his interpretation of Anselm, his insights have encouraged those working in his wake to explore new ways of thinking about the argument. Anton Pegis, for one, pointed out that any interpretation of the *Proslogion* should take the rest of the treatise as well as the *Monologion* into consideration.⁴⁰² Robert Sokolowski stressed that the most important thing about Anselm's argument is that it highlights the distinctly Christian distinction between the nature of God and the nature of the beings He has made.⁴⁰³ According to Sokolowski, the statement of belief in God's total otherness implicitly makes a statement about how beings are to be understood in terms of their dependence on God.

In what follows, my goal is to build on these insights by stating precisely how the argument of the *Proslogion* guides the reader to make faith an intelligible reality, and how chapters two and three relate to the rest of the treatise. I want to show exactly what sort of practical plan for re-conforming to God's image Anselm outlines in this text. I will do this by interpreting the work as Anselm indicates the reader ought to do, namely, in the light of Augustine's *De Trinitate*, and especially its latter half.

⁴⁰¹ See Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides quaerens intellectum*.

⁴⁰² Anton Pegis, "St. Anselm and the Argument of the *Proslogion*," *Medieval Studies* 28 (1966): 228-67.

If this approach has not been taken in the past, it is likely due to the fact that the interpretation of Anselm's argument as an *a priori* proof that became canonical in the modern period only obtains when chapters two and three are read with no regard for the rest of the *Proslogion* or the intellectual tradition and literary genre in which the *Proslogion* itself was composed. It is also likely that interpreters have avoided inquiring into the conceptual context *De Trinitate* provides for the *Proslogion* because *De Trinitate* itself was considered a difficult and controversial text until the scholars I mentioned in the last chapter demonstrated its coherent purpose. The earlier explanation of the treatise as a guide for conforming to the image of God, which presupposed its coherence, will now facilitate the effort to evaluate how Anselm perpetuates the pedagogical literary tradition Augustine founded as he completes the project he began in the *Monologion* in his *Proslogion*.

THE PROSLOGION AS A GUIDE TO CONFORMING TO GOD'S IMAGE

The prayerful start to Anselm's treatise is the first sign of its status as a guide to conforming to the image of God. Like Augustine, Anselm realizes the importance of acknowledging that God is greater than the self—that He is in fact the Highest Good—at the outset of the quest to understand Him. Such an attitude of characteristically Benedictine 'compunction' is indicative of faith or of the desire the human spirit has to glorify the Father through the use of gifts given by the Son. In this prayerful attitude, one admits that one does not understand all things and therefore puts oneself in the right frame of mind to undergo the renewal of the image of God.

On my understanding, Anselm's argument in chapter two is the conceptual resource he provides those wishing to experience the renewal of the image of God. With that 'single argument' or 'single formula' as it can be translated, he outlines the chain of reasoning through which his readers could train themselves to consider whatever they might encounter from the perspective of faith in God as the Supreme Good.⁴⁰³ That chain of reasoning is presented in proper syllogistic form.⁴⁰⁴ The

⁴⁰³ Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 9-10.

⁴⁰⁴ Richard Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 10.

conclusions follow from the premises, and the argument is valid. Anyone with basic training in logic could easily memorize the cognitive steps Anselm delineates in what I will describe as a ‘formula for conforming to the image of God’.

The first cognitive step, which premise one directs the reader to take, involves affirming that God is the Being that which none greater can be thought, or that He is the Highest Good. Anyone who thus recalls in faith the thought of God that was forgotten at the fall reinstates His existence in the mind, as per premise two. That is not to say that the effects of the fall are immediately overcome, however, such that the person of faith automatically lives by faith. As Anselm posits in the third premise, there is a vast disparity between existence in the mind and existence in reality. That is to say, there is a difference between having a preliminary faith and a faith that is being made effective by being brought to bear in the evaluation of temporal circumstances.

According to Anselm in premises four through six, it is fitting for the thought of God to take effect in real life and not only in the mind, because God Himself has both intellectual and real existence. To strive to transform the belief in God into a reality by considering all the things that can be seen under the influence of faith in what cannot be seen is to strive to render thoughts and actions consistent with the professed belief that God supremely exists. It is to think and act as though what one says is true and thus to think and act rationally.

In the separate argument he presents in chapter three, Anselm seems to suggest that anyone who claims to believe in God but thinks or acts in a way that suggests otherwise thinks and acts inconsistently and thus illogically. To put it in the precise words of both Augustine and Anselm, the person that gives assent to the faith but whose outlook and actions are incompatible with the faith is a fool. Foolish people negate their own words and at the same time the validity of their lives. They live a lie.

In offering these two arguments, Anselm steers his readers away from foolishness by showing them how to bring the knowledge of God as highest Good to

⁴⁰⁵ Toivo J. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, ch. 5; Brian Davies, “Anselm and the Ontological Argument,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, 168-71.

bear in their evaluation of temporal circumstances. His way of doing this, namely, through the formulation of a logical argument, has the added benefit of disclosing that the tools of logic and philosophy are not inimical to faith but can facilitate efforts to be transformed by it. Anselm's formula for conforming to God's image was one his readers could easily put to use in the effort to train themselves to reason under the influence of faith. All they had to do in evaluating any situation is briefly pause and run through the steps Anselm outlined, acknowledging that God is the Supreme Being (premise one); that they believe this (premise two); and that it is therefore fitting for them to think and act like they believe it in the present circumstances (premises three through six; also, the argument of chapter three).

Anselm's express desire was that his readers would utilize his formula for the sake overcoming the effect of the fall, which was the loss of the ability to bring the knowledge of God to bear on the knowledge of the world. Each application of the argument would help form the habit of reasoning in faith and break the habit of reasoning without it, renewing the image of God in the same instance. Through the committed use of the argument, Anselm promised that his readers would eventually learn to automatically reason in faith and thus experience the restoration of the image of God. The purpose of the argument Anselm presents in a prayer, in summary, is to facilitate prayer, or the gradual-to-constant orientation of human thoughts towards the Father through the use of the intellectual capacity given by the Son to the human spirit. Far from an *a priori* argument that makes no recourse to revelation and has no bearing on practical matters, Anselm's formula is designed to transform the one that employs it into 'living proof' for the existence of God.

The subsequent chapters of the *Proslogion* describe what a transformed mind and life look like. They indicate that the benefit of becoming living proof for God's existence is the discovery of His essence. For when faith that God supremely exists is brought to bear in efforts to understand reality, faith shapes the understanding of reality reason attains. It prevents the mind from perceiving its objects as supreme goods and leads it to correctly assess the nature and extent of their finite goodness. In sum, faith leads reason to grasp the essence of the objects under consideration.

Although such understanding in no way discloses anything about the essence of God, it does allow the one whose mind is affected by faith in God to see what sort of effect faith has on human understanding. Where faith informs efforts to acquire understanding, for example, it reminds that God is unchangingly good, or whatever it is better to be than not to be, as chapters five through twelve indicate. Bearing this in mind, one becomes able to resolve apparent tensions between God's justice and His mercy, for instance, because one can interpret His mercy as justice, His justice as mercy, and the injustices that can never be attributed to Him as means of accomplishing the ends of both justice and mercy.

The person of faith that presupposes that God is always the Highest Good and that He always works things out accordingly learns to perceive the unity of His attributes—that they are all expressions of His Goodness—and ceases to be troubled by alleged contradictions between divine justice and mercy. Whatever aspect of God's essence is experienced in a given instance is taken as a sign of His supreme goodness. Thus, when circumstances change so as to seemingly reveal more of His justice than His mercy, the belief in His supreme goodness prevents the mind from thinking Him unmerciful and preserves its confidence in His eternal goodness. It fosters a perspective that can find Him who is seen at no one place and time working good at all places and times, as the second cluster of chapters suggest.

As is stated in the third section on God's essence, this perspective is exactly the one that readies the mind to gaze on God. For the outlook that is constantly informed by faith and thus always identifies its effects is the outlook of one who unfailingly knows God through the things He is not and is therefore ready for the vision of what He essentially is.

Far from being an argument for God's existence that makes no recourse to revelation or experience, Anselm's formula for conforming to the image of God teaches the mind to apply the knowledge of the Triune God Christ revealed in ordinary circumstances. His argument is no natural theological proof, in which the existence of God is supposedly established through the mere penning of words on paper. It is a chain of reasoning designed to make it possible to prove that God exists in the only way possible, namely, through the person that lives as though the Triune

God really exists and that is able to give an account of His Triune existence, as it was revealed through the Person of Christ. Since the formula is not an *a priori* proof, Anselm is not guilty of separating knowledge of God from real life by faith in Christ. These are very conceptual threads his argument ties together.

Divine Illumination

In the preface to the *Proslogion*, Anselm writes that his formula for conforming to God's image came to him in a moment of illumination.⁴⁰⁶ Throughout the treatise, he frequently appeals to illumination as he explains how the argument facilitates the effort to conform to God's image. He does not pause to explain what illumination is. The absence of a systematic explanation of illumination and human knowledge more generally highlights the extent to which Augustine's views on these matters were presupposed by early Medieval thinkers such as Anselm.⁴⁰⁷ One can tell that Anselm is an Augustinian with respect to the theory of knowledge by illumination not because he gives an explicit account of illumination, but because he puts the theory to the same use as Augustine did, namely, in illustrating the cognitive process involved in conforming to the image of God.

From the first chapter of the *Proslogion*, it becomes clear that Anselm conceives of illumination as Augustine did. There, he states that as a result of the fall, human beings have been "deprived of light and surrounded with darkness...cast down from the vision of God into the present blindness."⁴⁰⁸ Although he affirms that faith opens blinded eyes, he states that newly uncovered eyes are not accustomed to the light and must be initially protected from it.⁴⁰⁹ In order to gain the strength to lift up a downcast gaze and see things in the light, Anselm says that his readers must plead with God to enlighten them.⁴¹⁰

Anselm then presents the famous formula through which he teaches his readers how to regard reality in the light of the belief that God is the Supreme Good.

⁴⁰⁶ Anselm, *Proslogion*, preface.

⁴⁰⁷ M.J. Charlesworth argues this in *St. Anselm's 'Proslogion'* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), as does Katherin A. Rogers in *The Neo-Platonic Metaphysics and Epistemology of Anselm and Canterbury*, 2.

⁴⁰⁸ Anselm, *Proslogion*, 1.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

When anyone forgets to employ the argument, Anselm writes that they are bound to fall back down into their own darkness.⁴¹¹ Whenever they remember to apply it, however, they are certain to find the light of truth. Through the ongoing use of the argument, Anselm states that the articles of faith that were believed at first are rendered intelligible by illumination.⁴¹² By these means, God reforms the human mind in His image.⁴¹³

As the image is renewed, the light by which the mind sees grows steadier, brighter, and broader. Vision at one level of light exposes where sight remains darkened and thus propels the mind onwards to a higher level.⁴¹⁴ So long as the mind bears in mind that the inaccessible Light of God is the one all-inclusive Light, Anselm writes that it will make progress in illumination and so simultaneously in the renewal of God's image. Considering things in His Light will prevent the mind from adhering to the false belief that anything else is so great a light by which to judge the world. By persistently adhering to that Light, Anselm affirms, the mind eventually becomes able to evaluate and prioritize all things in it, in all places and at all times. This vision in the light is the vision of the Light that is attainable in this life. Although such vision does not allow for the vision of the Light itself, it predisposes the mind to it.⁴¹⁵

Anselm the Augustinian

To claim that Anselm is an Augustinian is not at all controversial. Where scholars differ is in defining what it means to be an Augustinian. There are many that suppose that Anselm's metaphysics of exemplarity is an essentialist metaphysics that is accompanied by a correspondence of truth. Adherence to such a metaphysical account is taken to be one sign of Anselm's intellectual fidelity to Augustine. The project of proving God's existence through reason alone, which is made possible by turning inwards to reflect upon oneself as an image of God, is also considered to be an indicator of Anselm's intellectual allegiance to Augustine.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 18.

⁴¹² Ibid., 4.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 14.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

While I fully agree with the scholarly consensus that there is great continuity between Augustine and Anselm, I have identified the points of continuity rather differently. In the first place, I located continuity at the theological level. Anselm's perfect-being theology clearly upholds Augustine's views on Trinitarian theology, even if Anselm presents them in his own way. A theological approach allowed me to identify philosophical continuity between Augustine and Anselm, inasmuch as it enabled me to demonstrate that Anselm like Augustine appeals to a participatory rather than an essentialist metaphysics. Accordingly, he defines knowledge not as a matter of correspondence, but of the human subject's gradually growing participation in God's objective cognitive order, or God's thought of Himself, which is itself enabled by the *influentia* or flowing in of the natural cognitive power from God.

In participatory cognitive acts, the mind that cannot currently see God regards the things it can see in view of the fact that God is the Highest Good. Those efforts progressively reveal the profound significance and far-reaching implications of the articles of faith the mind affirmed from the very beginning. The insights into reality the intellect attains in faith that God is the source of all reality do not have God but creatures as their attendant objects. Inasmuch as ideas formed about creation are shaped by faith, however, God is known through the perspective on the world that belief in Him produces. He is known, along Augustinian lines, by negation, and that knowledge of God by negation adjusts the eyes of the mind for the positive knowledge of Him that is to come.

For Anselm as for Augustine, illumination serves to illustrate the process through which the mind relearns how to regard reality in the light of faith, or how it undergoes the renewal of God's image until a habit of reasoning in faith is formed and the image is constantly reflected through each cognitive act. Anselm's argument, far from an *a priori* proof that makes no recourse to revelation or experience, is the formula for conforming to God's image that fuels movement through higher grades of illumination, much like Augustine's psychological analogies.

Although Anselm does not always *sound* like Augustine, inasmuch as he experiments with new and more contextually relevant forms of philosophical

argumentation, for the sake of readers who wanted to know how to utilize recently recovered intellectual resources in the quest to know God, he *acts* like Augustine. From a genuinely Augustinian doctrine of the Trinity, he derives an account of human knowledge, which is an account of the illuminative process of conforming to God's image, which is phrased in forms of words that his readers would find meaningful and helpful. By virtually all accounts, Anselm's methodological departure from Augustine does not negate his intellectual fidelity to Augustine. On my account, it only confirms his desire to promulgate the Augustinian programme of knowledge by illumination and the theological assumptions that underpin it. Through his arguments advanced on the basis of 'reason alone', Anselm updated the claim that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge.

III. DIVINE ILLUMINATION IN TRANSITION

(1109 – 1257)

Introduction

The years intervening between the death of Anselm in 1109 and the start of Bonaventure's term as Minister General of the Franciscan order in 1257 were years of transition in the West. They were also years which would bring change for Augustine's illumination theory. In this chapter, my goal is to explain the events that transpired between the time of Anselm and Bonaventure that had an effect on the historical reception of the illumination account.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first, I give a broad overview of the twelfth and early thirteenth century developments that indirectly impacted the interpretation of illumination. In the second, I discuss certain aspects of the thought of the Arab scholar Avicenna (980-1037). In the third part, I trace the history of the Franciscan order from its origins to the start of Bonaventure's term as General in 1257. In this context, I explain how members of the early Franciscan school developed a new approach to interpreting Augustine in concordance with Avicenna in their efforts to define a distinctly Franciscan intellectual tradition.

The Twelfth Century Renaissance

At the dawn of the twelfth century, the West was entering into "a phase of extraordinary economic and demographic expansion which was to continue gathering momentum for the next two hundred years."⁴¹⁶ The increase in commercial and industrial activity had given rise to a class of tradesmen and artisans, whose work required them to congregate in urban settings. The towns that rapidly proliferated as a result of these developments were more than centres of commerce, however. They became centres of learning. Although literacy was a privilege normally reserved for the upper classes in earlier Medieval times, late Medieval middle-class merchants needed at least some education in order to go about their daily business. Families of

⁴¹⁶ C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London: Longman, 1994), 1.

means began to send their young men to the independent schools that were being founded in major towns all across Europe.

In the school he operated, Peter Abelard was redefining the way students studied primary texts. In his *Sic et non*, Abelard collated key passages from authoritative sources, juxtaposing those that appeared to contradict one another. His goal in doing this was not to undermine the authority of authorities. The use of *Sic et non* actually presupposed familiarity with the meaning and context of the primary sources, as well as belief in their authoritative status.⁴¹⁷ The work's purpose was to help students establish in their own minds the cogency and significance of the truths they accepted on authority by inciting them to reconcile apparently opposing claims and clarify ambiguities.⁴¹⁸

Abelard required his students to go about this through a series of steps. The first was to simply state an authoritative opinion. The second step was to present arguments in support of the opinion under consideration and to raise possible objections to it, drawing on other authorities to do so, especially those whose opinions were listed in the *Sic et non*. The third step was to deal with the objections and in the process bolster, nuance, and clearly define the contours of the originally stated view. In developing and utilizing this *quaestio* or scholastic method of inquiry, Abelard trained his students in a controlled environment to know truth 'by negation', that is, to use what they did know to discover what they formerly did not know.

Many traditional monastic thinkers, above all, Bernard of Clairvaux, were unsettled by Abelard's methods. Bernard called attention to the risk involved in fragmenting texts and authorizing students to critically evaluate them. In his opinion, Abelard's methods were likely to lead to the distortion of truth, or even to the rejection of it. Although Bernard's opposition resulted in the 1140 condemnation

⁴¹⁷ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition, vol. 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology 600-1300* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 223, ff.

⁴¹⁸ Andrew Cunningham & Roger French, *Before Science: The Invention of the Friars' Natural Philosophy* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996), 58.

of Abelard's writings, the use of scholastic techniques became increasingly common in schools over the course of the second half of the twelfth century.⁴¹⁹

Though a number of scholars after Abelard published compendia of authoritative *sententiae* or opinions much like *Sic et non*, Peter Lombard's four books of Sentences would prove to be the most exhaustive collection. The first book contained key citations on the topic of God's nature; the second included passages on creation and the fall; the third, redemption; and the fourth, the sacraments and eschatology. Although Lombard published his work in 1159, the tradition of commenting on his Sentences did not begin until after the University of Paris was founded in 1200.⁴²⁰ In that year, the numerous schools that had congregated in the burgeoning city were officially recognized as a consortium.

In the 1220's, Alexander of Hales became the first to compose a Sentence commentary. Additionally, he organized his lectures around the themes covered in the Sentences and used the work to facilitate the scholastic disputations that were by now the core of a university education. In these ways, he effectively founded the discipline of systematic theology.⁴²¹ Although Alexander's uses of the Sentences were controversial at first amongst those that still believed the scholastic approach undermined the authority of Scripture, the theology faculty was eventually persuaded to name the Sentences their official textbook.⁴²²

Subsequently, candidates for the degree of master in theology were required to write a commentary on the Sentences. A commentary on Lombard's books thus became the Medieval equivalent to the doctoral thesis. In their commentaries, scholars were instructed to employ scholastic methodology to explain authoritative opinions on God's nature, creation, the fall, redemption, and sacramental life. While the composition of a Sentence commentary afforded the opportunity to shed new

⁴¹⁹ See Constant J. Mews, "Philosophy and Theology 1100-1150: The Search for Harmony," in *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 168-72.

⁴²⁰ See Marcia Colish, "The Sentence Collection and the Education of Professional Theologians in the Twelfth Century," in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University*, ed. Nancy Van Deusen (Kalamazoo: W. Michigan University, 1997).

⁴²¹ Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 16.

⁴²² This happened sometime in the 1240's, according to Nancy Spatz in, "Approaches and Attitudes to a New Theology Textbook: The Sentences of Peter Lombard," in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University*.

light on received views or to state them in clearer terms, it also enabled scholars to innovatively re-define doctrines. It simply was not the case that Sentence commentators merely rehearsed the views of others. Instead, they presented their own ideas and bolstered them in the way Medieval scholars were expected to do, namely, on the basis of authoritative sources. In the process of doing this, scholars proved they had come to terms with Christian doctrine and were able to teach it. In some cases, the conclusions reached in a Sentence commentary became the research basis for a theological Summa.

As a growing number of young men enrolled in courses of study at the universities and in the schools across Europe, a class of literate and critically thinking people emerged. This development created a problem for the Catholic Church, which was still structured to meet the needs of a rural and relatively unlearned population. While some parish priests had the chance to receive training in the cathedral schools, these were usually hired to uphold the bureaucratic structures of church and state. The typical clergyman had little more education than his parishioners.

The learned laity of the twelfth century quickly grew critical of the intellectual and in many cases moral ineptitude of the parochial clergy.⁴²³ The distance between the twelfth-century laypeople and the universal Church was increased by religious ideals that remained from earlier times. In the early Middle Ages, the genuine spiritual life was regarded as one of retreat from the world, as in an enclosed monastery. The ideal of withdrawal was not only impracticable for the laity; it also undermined their lifestyle and vocation choices, which kept them engaged in 'worldly' affairs.

A lack of meaningful spiritual direction contributed to the rise of new and radical religious movements in the latter half of the twelfth century. During this time, lay preachers, who neither solicited nor obtained ecclesial authorization, wandered about Europe and in many cases, spread false teachings. The charisma and commitment of these itinerant preachers is what attracted the laity to them.

⁴²³ See C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars*, 1-25.

The greatest threat to Christian orthodoxy in this period was posed by advocates of the Cathar heresy. The Cathars were dualists who believed in two divine forces, one good and one evil, and they saw the material world as the product of the evil power. They drew mainly on Scripture and Aristotle's natural philosophical works to rationalize their positions. In France and Italy particularly, many people were persuaded to join the Cathars. The leaders of the sect exhibited discipline, commitment, and intellectual rigor, the very qualities that the Catholic clergy were perceived to lack. Indeed, it was the negligence of the prelates that governed regions of Europe heavily populated by Cathars that indirectly contributed to the success of their efforts to proselytize.

By 1215, the religious situation in Western Europe had grown serious. The fourth Lateran council convened to enact a comprehensive program to educate and reform the parish clergy and curb the spread of radical religious movements and heresies.⁴²⁴ The Council fathers also decreed that every Catholic should receive communion and go to confession once a year. The plans that were made met with mild success.

Around the time of the council, Francis of Assisi and Dominic Guzman founded new religious orders. Francis and his followers received official papal approval in 1209 for their work of preaching repentance and serving the poor. In 1216, Dominic was sanctioned to recruit and train preachers to address the Cathar heretics and their converts. By their very nature, the Dominicans were a scholarly order. Dominic's intention was to set up Dominican study centres in all towns where there were major schools.⁴²⁵ Early Dominican scholars, most notably Albert the Great, worked to derive an intellectual system from the same sources the Cathars employed to promote dualism, namely, Scripture and Aristotle. In this, they forged the resources they needed to respond to the Cathars.

Both the Franciscans and the Dominicans based their ministry in the towns. Inasmuch as Francis and Dominic abandoned enclosure for the sake of actively engaging in an urban evangelistic and pastoral ministry, their orders represented "a

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 218.

⁴²⁵ Andrew Cunningham & Roger French, *Before Science*, 151.

radical breakaway from the monastic tradition of the past.”⁴²⁶ Unlike the Benedictines who owned property collectively, the two orders of mendicant friars took vows of poverty. For the Franciscans, the vow was to own nothing whatsoever. For the Dominicans, taking the vow meant possessing only the resources required for ministry and relying on donations to obtain them. For members of both orders, swearing vows of poverty entailed opting out of the struggle for ecclesial power in which so many members of the clergy were embroiled.

Because the Franciscans and Dominicans sought to minister to the relatively educated inhabitants of towns, they determined to organize themselves to educate new recruits, the Dominicans from the beginning, and the Franciscans, within the first twenty-five years of their existence. By the end of the thirteenth century, the Franciscans and Dominicans had become known as the ‘student orders’, and they dominated the theological scene at the new universities.

Since the friars were trained and available for the pastoral ministry of preaching, administering the sacraments, and hearing confessions, but were intent on avoiding positions of ecclesial power and thus corruption, they quickly became the most trusted agents of thirteenth-century prelates and popes. Ecclesial authorities, who had virtually abandoned their attempts to reform the clergy, came to rely primarily upon the friars to meet the pastoral demands of local parishes, enforce the Lateran mandates, and deal with any problem of a religious nature whatsoever. As in the earlier Medieval period, the religious orders played a crucial role in sustaining the social, intellectual, and religious life of Western Europe.

Further afield, another great movement was taking place, which would have a monumental impact on Latin intellectual life. During the so-called dark ages, Islamic forces had overtaken some formerly Christian territories and had engaged during this time in rigorous scholarship. As the West began to regain its strength in the twelfth century, Christian forces reclaimed certain strongholds from the Moors. When they recovered Sicily in southern Italy and Toledo, Spain, they gained access

⁴²⁶ C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 238.

to the wealth of Greek and Arabic scholarly resources that were available in these Islamic centres of learning.

Owing to its close relations with Byzantium, “Italy was the privileged land for Greco-Latin translations.”⁴²⁷ By 1160, James of Venice had translated Aristotle’s *Physica*, *De anima*, *De sophisticis elenchis*, *Analytica posteriora*, *Parva naturalia*, *De memoria*, *De iuventute*, *De longitudine vitae*, *De vita*, and *De respiratione*.⁴²⁸ By the late twelfth century, the translation of Aristotle’s *Metaphysica* was virtually complete, and the first three books of the *Ethica Nichomachea* and *Analytica priora* had also become available.⁴²⁹

Most of the Arabic to Latin translation work took place in Toledo. Between 1152 and 1166, Dominicus Gundissalinus, Archdeacon of Toledo, commissioned a group of scholars to undertake a huge translation project in which he himself participated. Gundissalinus’ special interest was to oversee the translation of the immense philosophical encyclopaedia of Avicenna, which included treatises on medicine, psychology, astronomy, astrology, science and natural philosophy, logic, metaphysics, and theology.⁴³⁰ Gerard of Cremona was Gundissalinus’ most prolific translator. Records indicate that he translated seventy-one Arabic texts.⁴³¹ In addition to these, Gerard produced his own versions of a number of Aristotle’s works and translated the Neo-Platonic *Liber de causis*, probably an Arabic paraphrase of Proclus’ *Elements of Theology*.⁴³²

At the time, neither Western scholars nor even Aristotle had anything comparable to the scientific and medical works of the Arabs. In the early years of the translation movement, consequently, Medieval scholars were most eager to explore these resources that were formerly unknown to them. They were especially interested in the seemingly exhaustive work of Avicenna. Avicenna’s most influential text was his *De anima*, which was closely followed in popularity by his

⁴²⁷ Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “Translations and Translators,” in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Robert L. Benson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 458.

⁴²⁸ Bernard G. Dod, “Aristoteles latinus,” in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 46.

⁴²⁹ Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “Translations and Translators,” 436.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 451.

⁴³¹ Bernard G. Dod, “Aristoteles latinus,” 58.

⁴³² Marie-Thérèse d’Alverny, “Translations and Translators,” 543-44.

Metaphysics.⁴³³ Although Medievalists often mistake these works for mere commentaries on the treatises by Aristotle that bear the same titles, they actually contain a system that is Avicenna's invention.⁴³⁴

All of Avicenna's works appeared together in translation before the same could be said for Aristotle. When the complete works of Aristotle did at last appear in Latin, the translations were so riddled with errors, that the scholars who did read them neither felt able nor obligated to correctly interpret them.⁴³⁵ The translations of Avicenna's writings, by contrast, were impeccable, since they were produced by Westerners that had been brought up in Moorish Spain and were fluent in both Latin and Arabic.

Because the translations of Avicenna were so superior to those of Aristotle, Latin scholars working between the middle of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries tended to trust Avicenna to interpret the teachings of Plato and Aristotle for them, even though the Arab's interpretation of the two philosophers differed greatly from those which late antique and early Medieval Western thinkers had presupposed, and even from the plain sense of the primary texts.⁴³⁶ Although scholars did directly quote Plato and Aristotle, it was usually the case that Avicennian doctrines were being attributed to the philosophers.⁴³⁷ The views of Aristotle were further distorted during this period because the widely circulated *Liber de causis* was attributed to him until Thomas Aquinas traced the text to Proclean sources in 1268.

At the instigation of Albert the Great, scholars finally started to focus on Aristotle in his own right from the 1240's onwards.⁴³⁸ Like many of his contemporaries, Albert appreciated the scholarship of Avicenna. Still, he gave "greater weight to the authority of Aristotle"⁴³⁹ and rejected aspects of Avicenna's philosophy on numerous occasions for reasons of doctrine. In Albert's wake, efforts to understand Aristotle for his own sake began in earnest.

⁴³³ Dag Hasse, *Avicenna's 'De anima' in the Latin West* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2000), 8.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴³⁵ Richard C. Dales, "The Understanding of Aristotle's Natural Philosophy by the Early Scholastics," in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University*, 142.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴³⁷ Dag Hasse, *Avicenna's 'De anima'*, 63.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*

These efforts were facilitated by two other developments in the translation movement. In the 1220's and 1230's, Michael Scot had translated the Aristotelian commentaries of Averroes, who was still writing in Spain when the Toledo translation project began.⁴⁴⁰ Those commentaries provided both a model and source for thirteenth-century scholastic commentators on Aristotle.⁴⁴¹ In the 1240's, they began to be the subject of rigorous studies. In the 1250's, moreover, William of Moerbeke completed new and far more refined translations of Aristotle's primary texts, making it possible for serious scholarly work on Aristotle to begin.

While the received view amongst historians of the Middle Ages is that late Medieval Latin scholars were preoccupied first and foremost with incorporating the work of Aristotle, recent research has shown that there was a considerable lapse of time between the initial translation of Aristotle's writings and their systematic employment by Latin authors.⁴⁴² Although the Stagirite's work became the canon of university of education in the middle of the thirteenth century, it was not the centre of attention in the preceding hundred years.⁴⁴³ During that time, scholars were absorbed in the thought of the Arab scholar Avicenna.

Avicenna

In this section, I will discuss the aspects of Avicenna's account of God's nature, the natural order, the human intellect, and divine illumination, which influenced early thirteenth-century scholars, and especially the founders of the Franciscan intellectual tradition.

THEOLOGY & COSMOLOGY

Avicenna was the first philosopher to explicitly define God as the Being whose essence is equal to His existence. When he introduced the distinction between essence and existence, Avicenna codified a formula for expressing the belief that

⁴⁴⁰ Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," 456.

⁴⁴¹ Dag Hasse, *Avicenna's 'De anima'*, 75.

⁴⁴² Richard C. Dales. "The Understanding of Aristotle's Natural Philosophy by the Early Scholastics," 141.

⁴⁴³ Dag Hasse, *Avicenna's 'De anima'*, 227.

God simply is what He is, which is all that is.⁴⁴⁴ That belief, as David Burrell has superbly demonstrated, is one that members of both Islamic and Christian traditions hold in common.⁴⁴⁵

Avicenna describes the derivation of the natural order from God as a ten-step process, which is set in motion by the First Cause that eternally thinks itself. In thinking itself, this cause emanates its Intelligence. The First Intelligence generates its own realm of ideas. That is to say, it becomes the mover of its own sphere of forms, which comprise a subsequent level of Intelligence that recapitulates the creative work of the first. In this way, subsequent intellects and intelligible spheres are produced until the line terminates at the tenth intelligence.⁴⁴⁶ That intelligence is the so-called Active Intellect, which contains the forms of all natural beings, or “the rational principles by which things in nature are what they are.”⁴⁴⁷ Avicenna therefore calls the Active Intellect the ‘Giver of Forms’ (*dator formarum*).

Avicenna describes the character of the forms as absolute. Like God, “each of them is just what it is.”⁴⁴⁸ According to Avicenna, every form or essence is found in three different conditions: in itself or in the Active Intellect, instantiated in a concrete object, and in the human intellect. The essences contained in the Active Intellect can, but need not necessarily be, instantiated by the Giver of Forms. Essence, in other words, does not entail real existence. Instead, existence is a property God imparts to an essence when He instantiates the essence in the natural realm. When He does so, Avicenna insists that the existing form fully conforms to its essence. All that belongs to the definition of that essence, conversely, belongs to the existing thing.

Since forms are fixed in Avicenna’s essentialist metaphysics, the logical corollary is that any creature with a plurality of properties must have a plurality of substantial forms. Where there are distinct notions, Avicenna perceives distinct

⁴⁴⁴ Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 1.5, 5.1-2.

⁴⁴⁵ David B. Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

⁴⁴⁶ Lenn Goodman, *Avicenna* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 82.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Etienne Gilson, *History*, 191.

forms. Because he believes forms are unchanging, Avicenna does not locate the difference between creatures and their Creator at the level of a difference in the relationship between essence and existence. On his reasoning, there is no need to develop into an essence through increasing participation in a particular mode of existence, because instantiations of forms are already complete instantiations.

For Avicenna, created forms differ from God in virtue of the fact that they are compounds of at least two substantial forms, namely, the form of materiality or corporeality (*forma corporeitatis*), and the essential form that is provided by the soul. Even separate Intelligences are composites of spiritual matter and form, according to Avicenna's doctrine of universal hylomorphism. As for corporeal forms, Avicenna affirms that what underlies them is a substance called prime matter. In his view, prime matter has positive existence and is 'privative' only in the sense that it is receptive to the impression of forms. In fact, prime matter is effectively a large mass of formless existence. Imposing forms on it was and is the way God confers existence to them. Moreover, it is the way He ties all creatures together in an interdependent network.

The second form every creature possesses, that of the soul, determines its complexity and therefore its level of perfection.⁴⁴⁹ There are three types of soul. The vegetable soul is responsible for a being's reproduction, growth, and nourishment.⁴⁵⁰ All living creatures possess a vegetable soul. "Life forms possessing the animal soul differ from those that only have the vegetable soul in their ability to move freely as well as in their capacity for sensual perception."⁴⁵¹ All animals have the five external senses and a set of five internal senses. Only human beings possess a rational soul. A creature's soul gives it a certain sort of 'complexion', which predisposes it to receive other substantial forms from the Giver of Forms. If a being seems to change in colour or shape and so forth, it is not owing to increasing participation in a particular form. Rather, change is brought about by the coming and going of forms.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid., 195.

⁴⁵⁰ Peter Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 60.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 61.

Because God is the efficient cause that impresses forms onto matter, giving existence to essences, every change a creature undergoes is directly brought about by Him. Here, as Etienne Gilson has noted, Avicenna presents a novel notion of divine causality that “exhibits a tendency to invade the order of natural causality.”⁴⁵² The age-old *influentia* model of causality had exhibited no such tendency. On that model, God gives each creature a single form and thus instils in it the potential to actualize the essence He has given through participation in the mode of existence or characteristic behaviours that are determined by the essence. Subsequent, direct involvement on His part is not needed in order for the creature to undergo natural development, even though God is always indirectly responsible for development, inasmuch as His primary causality was the force that first set secondary causes in motion.

In the stead of the *influentia* model, Avicenna introduces what has been called the ‘*concursum*’ model of divine causality.⁴⁵³ In this model, God’s primary causality actually makes secondary causation happen. Every creaturely change represents the removal of an old form or the impression of a new one by His hand. Whatever a creature appears to do as it grows or changes is in fact the product of its cooperation with God.

PSYCHOLOGY

The Animal Soul

In his *De anima*, Avicenna gives an elaborate account of the operations of animal and rational souls. The animal soul that human beings have in common with beasts is comprised of five external senses and five internal senses. The external senses, which come into direct contact with the material world include sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.⁴⁵⁴ The five internal senses do not immediately perceive the external world, but apprehend images of material entities.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵² Etienne Gilson, *History*, 210-11.

⁴⁵³ Jacob Schmutz, “Causalité et nature pure,” 220, ff.

⁴⁵⁴ F. Rahman (ed.), *Avicenna’s De anima* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 2.

⁴⁵⁵ Peter Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy*, 61.

The first of the internal senses is the common sense. The common sense initially grasps information transferred from the five senses. Its apprehension is an exact reflection of the object the external senses perceive. The common sense not only receives empirical information about an object; it also coordinates the perception of the forms that constitute the object. Without this sense, the animal soul would see each of the forms that comprise an object individually. It would see hardness, roughness, brownness, woodenness, and so forth instead of a tree, for example.

Although the common sense represents the forms that constitute sense objects, it cannot retain those forms. The retentive imagination is the faculty that keeps the forms of things even after the external senses have lost contact with them.⁴⁵⁶ It preserves the knowledge of the object, together with all its determining attributes or accidents, the image of the tree, as well as its size, shape, and colour.

The images stored in the retentive imagination are transmitted to the compositive imagination in animals, or the cogitative faculty, in humans. This faculty distinguishes between the particular forms that can be identified in any given being. The compositive faculty enables one to recombine forms that have been separated to make images of things that have not yet been experienced or that may not even exist.

The faculty of estimation assigns positive or negative connotations to the forms that have been apprehended. It identifies forms as helpful or dangerous, for instance. The estimative faculty transforms the images of forms into what Avicenna calls intentions.⁴⁵⁷ An intention is the final product of external and internal sensation. It is the image of a particular form that is derived from an encounter with a material object. Although the internal senses enable the animal soul to consider the forms independently from material objects, Avicenna stresses that, at this phase, those forms are still evaluated in the particular mode. While the process of abstracting a universal concept has begun, at least for one with a rational in addition to an animal soul, that process cannot be completed by the animal soul. Instead,

⁴⁵⁶ F. Rahman (ed.), *Avicenna's De anima*, 4.1.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.3.

intentions are stored in the fifth and final faculty associated with the internal senses, the memory, where they are made available to the rational soul.

The Rational Soul

The rational soul is the only soul capable of abstracting a universal form that is detached from all particular and material determinations, a form with purely intelligible or immaterial existence. According to Avicenna, there are two ‘faces’ to the rational soul: the theoretical and the practical. The former is oriented towards things above, namely, intelligible forms, and the latter to things below, or material bodies.⁴⁵⁸ The theoretical aspect acquires the knowledge of universals, while the practical intellect borrows the theoretical intellect’s knowledge of universals and applies them in dealing with particular problems. For this reason, the practical intellect requires the cooperation of the body and the corporeal powers of the soul.⁴⁵⁹

The theoretical intellect, by contrast, needs absolutely no help from the body, once it has procured intentions from the memory. In fact, it is only hindered from its work by interference from the body.⁴⁶⁰ After all, the soul and the body are utterly distinct substantial forms. Avicenna evidences his belief in the intellect’s independence from the body when he presents his famous ‘Flying Man’ thought experiment, which has been compared with the second meditation of Descartes.⁴⁶¹

In this thought experiment, Avicenna wonders whether a person who was created flying in the air, and who could not for that reason feel the body, would still affirm the existence of the rational soul. Avicenna insists that s/he would. Since the form of the soul is distinct from the form of the body, he reasons, it is possible to feel the former even when one cannot feel the latter. Advocating mind-body dualism was Avicenna’s way of establishing the eternal life of the soul after the death of the body. The Arab does not seem sensitive to the problem of proving the possibility of communication between the sense and intellectual faculties that later became

⁴⁵⁸ Muhammad Ali Khalidi (trans.), “Ibn Sina: On the Soul,” in *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 28.

⁴⁵⁹ Etienne Gilson, *History*, 202.

⁴⁶⁰ Muhammad Ali Khalidi (trans.), “Ibn Sina: On the Soul,” 41-4.

⁴⁶¹ F. Rahman (ed.), *Avicenna’s De anima*, 1.1; Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*; Dag Hasse, *Avicenna’s ‘De anima’*, 80, ff.

associated with dualism. He apparently assumes communication is possible in virtue of the fact that both the animal and rational souls are situated in the same entity, that is, the human being.

After the discussion of the two faces of the soul, Avicenna explains his theory of the four intellects.⁴⁶² The four intellects as he describes them are really stages in the process of actualizing the theoretical capacity to abstract a universal concept. The first three intellects constitute the ‘potential intellect’. In other words, they represent different degrees of human potential for abstraction. The first intellect is called the material intellect (*intellectus materialis*). The material intellect is likened to the primitive intellectual state of human beings before they reach the age of reason, or more concretely, the potential an infant has to eventually learn to write.

The ‘habitual’ intellect (*intellectus in habitu*) is analogous to the knowledge of the principles of writing, such as the letters of the alphabet or the proper use of writing instruments. When the rational soul reaches the age of reason, the material intellect receives what Avicenna calls primary intelligibles.⁴⁶³ The primary intelligibles are innately known concepts. The Giver of Forms who bestows all substantial forms impresses these intelligible forms on the habitual intellect. The forms are not the universal concepts that will be abstracted. Rather, they serve as guides for abstraction. They are the *a priori* principles that anchor and orient human reasoning, ensuring the truth and certitude of the ideas that come to be known.⁴⁶⁴

The first intelligible (*primum cognitum*) the habitual intellect intuitively is the concept of Being (*ens*). Avicenna argues that Being is the first object of the intellect on the grounds that the knowledge of any particular being presupposes the knowledge of the existence of a Being that is the source of all beings. Since God is the cause of beings, Avicenna contends that it is possible to derive proof for His existence from the analysis of the very concept of God as the cause of all beings. That is to say, he thinks it possible to attain *a priori* proof for God’s existence, and

⁴⁶² See Muhammad Ali Khalidi’s translation of *De anima* 5, which contains the account of the doctrine of the four intellects, in “Ibn Sina: On the Soul,” 27-58.

⁴⁶³ See Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, 1.5: on the doctrine of primary intelligibles.

⁴⁶⁴ Lenn Goodman, *Avicenna*, 124.

thus affirms that it falls within the domain of metaphysical inquiry to establish the existence of God.

This view is to be contrasted with that of Averroes, who like Aristotle thought proof of the divine could only be provided *a posteriori* within the discipline of physics, and therefore strictly cosmologically, that is, in moving from the knowledge of effects to proof for the cause.⁴⁶⁵ By starting with proof of the cause without reference to its effects, Avicenna believed he could also implicitly demonstrate that the effects are indicative of the cause. In other words, he assumed that his ontological proof for God's existence contained a cosmological proof as well.

Besides Being, Avicenna argues that the intellect knows the 'transcendental' properties of Being, such as one, true, and good.⁴⁶⁶ The intuitive knowledge of such primary intelligibles is the cognitive resource that is required to strip intentions of their particularizing features and so discern the essence—the qualities of unity, truth, and goodness manifested in a certain forms—at the core of any given intention. That stripped down version of the intention is an abstract concept that Avicenna calls a secondary intelligible form. The effective intellect (*intellectus in effectu*) is the one that acquires secondary intelligibles but does not actually employ them. Avicenna likens the effective intellect to the state of one that has learned to write and has written in the past but is not presently doing so.

When the intellect is in the act of knowing an abstract concept, it is called the acquired intellect. This fourth intellect is the one that actually sees an intention stripped of its material determinations such as size, colour, place, and time, and "lays bare the essence of a singular of its individualizing determinations."⁴⁶⁷ It "consists precisely in grasping essences just as they are in themselves and in their state of complete indetermination."⁴⁶⁸ The secondary intelligible captures the kernel of truth, the essence, of the intention from which it was derived. That abstract concept

⁴⁶⁵ Herbert A. Davidson, "Avicenna's Proof of the Existence of God as a Necessarily Existent Being," 180.

⁴⁶⁶ Lenn Goodman, *Avicenna*, 130, ff.

⁴⁶⁷ Etienne Gilson, *History*, 204.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 200 & F. Rahman (ed.), *Avicenna's De anima*, 2.2.

corresponds to the essence as it subsists in itself.⁴⁶⁹ At this stage, the form under consideration truly does exist in its three conditions: in a concrete object, in the intellect, and in itself. According to Avicenna, the intellect does not need to compare multiple forms in order to grasp an essence. A single intention is enough, because every instance of an essence is in full possession of all of the characteristics of the essence, such that the same essence is necessarily discerned once other forms and attributes are detached from it.

The process of abstracting a universal concept, as Avicenna understands it, can be summarized as follows. The habitual intellect is impressed with certain primary intelligible forms, which are not acquired but are innately known. These *a priori* rules equip the rational soul to strip extraneous forms away from one particular form so as to grasp the nature of the form as it subsists in itself. Primary intelligible forms supervise acts of reasoning so that they will lead the intellect to see what is essential in the objects of experience, and thus to see a secondary intelligible form, a thing as it exists in the Active Intellect of God.

According to Avicenna, any intellect that actualizes the potential to know a secondary intelligible form in this way necessarily does so on account of the intellect that always remains in act. The Active Intellect is that intellect which, “actually has the disembodied conceptual forms of things.”⁴⁷⁰ To move from potency to act in the mode of the acquired intellect, therefore, is simply to establish a connection between the human potential intellect and the Active Intellect. When the rational soul abstracts, in other words, it does not form an idea but receives one from the Giver of Forms.⁴⁷¹ When the human being makes a discovery, it is owing to the fact that s/he has tapped into the potential to receive from God, who accomplishes all cognitive activity. As per the *concursum* model, all human learning is a shared effort on the part of the human and divine mind.

Since the knowledge of forms comes in consequence of a connection with the Active Intellect, Avicenna argues that there is no intellectual memory of secondary intelligible forms. Each time the intellect considers an abstract concept, it

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 208 & Ibid., 1.9.

⁴⁷⁰ Lenn Goodman, *Avicenna*, 136.

apprehends it anew by re-connecting with the Active Intellect. Fortunately, it does not have to re-learn how to make the connection each time it thinks if it has already developed a disposition to receive a certain form, as this disposition is retained in the effective intellect.

While the process of connecting with the Active Intellect is laborious for many, there are some for whom it is virtually effortless. These possess what Avicenna calls the sacred intellect, or the intellect of prophets, through which it is possible to bypass the phases of potency and constantly maintain an intuitive connection with the Active Intellect, and thus always have direct insight into the meaning of all things.⁴⁷²

As he draws the discussion of the four intellects to a close, Avicenna illustrates the move from potency to act by appealing to the metaphor of the sun and illumination.⁴⁷³ On his account, the Active Intellect is to the human potential intellect as sun is to human vision. The Active Intellect gives the primary intelligible forms, which he likens to the capacity for vision, and it imparts the secondary intelligible forms, which he compares to the objects the sun brings to light. The Active Intellect thus illumines both the subject and the object of knowledge. By means of the primary and secondary intelligible forms, the divine being works concurrently with the rational being, such that all human knowledge becomes directly attributable to divine illumination.

AVICENNA VS. ARISTOTLE

Avicenna's *De anima* is the Arab philosopher's own version of the theory of passive and active intellects Aristotle develops in his work which goes by that same name.⁴⁷⁴ Although Avicenna employs much of Aristotle's terminology and structures his discussion of the soul along the lines of Aristotle, his teachings represent a departure from Aristotle.

⁴⁷¹ Etienne Gilson, *History*, 205.

⁴⁷² Muhammad Ali Khalidi (trans.), "Ibn Sina: On the Soul," 32.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 57-8.

⁴⁷⁴ Aristotle, "On the Soul," trans. J.A. Smith in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

For Aristotle, the intellectual activity of abstraction begins at the level of sense perception. The imagination makes images of sense objects.⁴⁷⁵ Those images are stored in the passive intellect, which is called passive on account of the fact that empirical data that comes to the intellect is in many respects beyond the intellect's control. On the basis of multiple images, the agent or active intellect abstracts a universal concept (intelligible species) that is stored in the memory, which Aristotle calls the possible intellect.⁴⁷⁶ Further experience may require that the concept be adjusted to account for the new images that are produced through experience.

Because Aristotle conceives created forms as subject to constant evolution, he sees fit to define abstraction accordingly. Although the concepts the intellect produces are said to represent reality, the representation, as Aristotle envisions it, does not involve a "correspondence between mental acts and the objects they relate to."⁴⁷⁷ Moreover, the intelligible species is in no way identified with either "the direct object of perception or the immediate object of cognition."⁴⁷⁸ In short, the species is not a 'thing'. Rather, it is a provisional concept the knower constructs for the sake of making sense of reality by connecting and distinguishing related and unrelated things, respectively, and broadening the horizons of its species in the process.⁴⁷⁹ Insofar as Aristotle's account of cognition hinges on the mind's ongoing cooperation with the faculties of sensation and imagination, there is no trace of dualism in it.

In a number of recently published studies, scholars have drawn attention to the fact that Avicenna's understanding of abstraction widely diverges from that of Aristotle and is in fact highly innovative.⁴⁸⁰ According to these studies, Avicenna's doctrine of intentions revolutionized the definition of cognitive representation, and

⁴⁷⁵ The following account of Aristotle's theory of abstraction is based on the *De anima* of Aristotle himself and on Leen Spruit, *Species intelligibiles: From Perception to Knowledge, vol. 1: Classical Roots and Medieval Discussions* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 4, ff.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 79 ff; see also Dag Hasse, *Avicenna's 'De anima'*, 127; Olivier Boulnois, *Être et représentation: Une généalogie de la métaphysique moderne à l'époque de Duns Scot (13-14 siècle)*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008); Henrik Lagerlund, "The Terminological and Conceptual Roots of Representation in the Soul in Late Ancient and Medieval Philosophy," & Martin

indeed, brought the issue of representation to the fore of Medieval scholarly discussion in an unprecedented way. For the first time in the history of the Medieval West, the focus turned towards the contents rather than the functional character of mental states. The mental image or intention was supposed to capture the whole of a particular essence, notwithstanding the attachment of additional attributes.

This ‘totalized’ concept of the content of mental states is the natural companion to an essentialist metaphysics, in which instances of forms are perceived as immutable. In Avicenna’s account, abstraction is defined accordingly as the cognitive act in which mind determines the direct correspondence between the instance of an essence and the essence itself. The emphasis is not on the ongoing *activity* of abstraction as in Aristotle, but on the abstract concept or ‘thing itself’.

Although many Medieval historians have mistaken Avicenna’s theory of abstraction for Aristotle’s, new research is teaching scholars to distinguish the two standards of knowledge that came into circulation in the thirteenth century and to acknowledge that the representational standard Avicenna introduced quickly replaced the early Medieval theories of knowledge inspired by Augustine in academic contexts.⁴⁸¹ The Avicennian standard was the one that became especially popular in Franciscan intellectual circles. The account of the early history of the Franciscan order I offer in the next section will help clarify why the friars minor found an Avicennian account of knowledge so appealing.

The Franciscan Order

THE HISTORY OF THE ORDER: 1209-1257

When he was still a young man, Francesco Bernardone experienced the first of numerous visitations from Christ. Hitherto, he had enjoyed a carefree and extravagant life as the son of a wealthy Italian cloth merchant. As a result of this vision, however, Francis began to withdraw from the “rowdy, pleasure-seeking life

Tweedale, “Representation in Scholastic Epistemology,” in *Representation and Objects of Thought in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

⁴⁸¹ Leen Spruit, *Species intelligibiles*, 254; see also 131.

which he had led, and to spend far more time in quiet meditation and prayer.”⁴⁸²

During one of his regular visits to the ruined church of San Damiano just outside his hometown of Assisi, Francis had yet another visit from Christ. While praying before the altar, Francis heard the icon of the crucified Christ command him three times to repair the ruined house of God.

After this encounter, Francis fully committed himself to a life of poverty and began to wander throughout the countryside, taking work and performing acts of service wherever he could. In 1206 he heard a sermon on Matthew 10:9, the passage where Christ instructs his follows to go proclaim the gospel, leaving money and possessions behind them. During this sermon, he claimed that Christ visited him again, telling him to preach a message of repentance. By 1209, eleven men had joined Francis in renouncing their worldly goods and committing themselves to an itinerant life of service to the sick and poor. Together, they composed a Rule for a new religious order, which was soon approved by Pope Innocent III.

As they travelled around to preach and serve, Francis taught his disciples how to live in a Christ-like manner. For him, the crucified Christ by whom he was periodically visited was the epitome of God’s loving nature. To imitate Him, on Francis’ understanding, was to live and even die in total self-abandonment, and to do this by *literally* observing His instructions to forsake everything.⁴⁸³ By becoming humble for the sake of others, as Christ did, Francis thought his followers could learn to see even the lowliest of creatures as a perfect reflection of the divine love. Francis’ own intimate relationship with Christ and efforts to imitate Him allowed him to live in harmony with nature. Legend has it that he once preached a sermon to a flock of attentive birds, drew water from a rock for a beggar, and tamed a rabid wolf. His charisma and commitment captivated the large audiences that gathered to hear his compelling words.⁴⁸⁴

At one such gathering, an Italian count was so moved that he donated his property on the mountain of La Verna to the friars as a place of prayer; and at many

⁴⁸² John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order: From Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 5.

⁴⁸³ C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars*, 32.

⁴⁸⁴ John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, 26.

other gatherings, the friars gained disciples. These disciples established new Franciscan outposts in the major cities across Europe where the Franciscans preached. By 1217, there were so many recruits that ministers had to be selected to oversee the eleven provinces in Western Europe now occupied by friars. Around this same time, a cardinal called Ugolino took an interest in the order. He believed that if the friars were better organized, they could compensate for the inadequacies of the clergy and do a great service to the Church. At Ugolino's request, Francis appointed the cardinal the Protector of the order. Within a few years, Francis had delegated all his administrative duties to Ugolino and his good friend Elias. The responsibilities involved in governing an order that had grown to include 5,000 members were neither his passion nor his gift.

Elias and Ugolino saw Francis' ideals as impracticable in such a sizeable order. In their opinion, some provision had to be made for the basic needs of the friars. While Francis was away on an Eastern missionary journey, they took measures to ensure that the friars had suitable accommodation and preaching facilities. When Francis returned, he was horrified to find that the life of poverty he prescribed was being compromised. He took pains to re-iterate that his friars should possess nothing and live from day to day on the goodwill of the faithful. He refused to allow them the privilege of becoming ordained preachers and insisted that they continue to preach with the consent of the local clergy.

With so many friars wanting to preach, however, Ugolino and Elias realized that obtaining permission to do so from the parochial clergy on a case-by-case basis was now a logistical impossibility. The friars needed to found their own congregations and acquire the credentials to oversee them. Additionally, unlearned novice friars needed to be prepared for preaching in the first place. In light of all this, Elias and Ugolino asked Francis to revise his original rule, hoping he would sanction the changes they felt were necessary.

When Francis returned from the countryside with the new rule he had written there, which he claimed Christ dictated to him, he presented Elias and Ugolino with an expanded statement of his original mandates. He refused to allow study within the order, arguing that the life of study interferes with absolute poverty, since it

requires many resources, and with humility, since knowledge tends to elicit pride. Disregarding Francis' wishes, Ugolino softened these mandates and had the pope approve the rule of 1223, which remains the rule of the order today.⁴⁸⁵ By this time, Francis was so frequently ill that he could no longer oppose the changes that were being made. In 1224, he retreated to La Verna. During this time, he had his famous vision of the six-winged seraph nailed to the cross. He was marked with the Stigmata, from which he supposedly died in 1226.

As soon as Francis had passed away, Elias determined to see that he was canonized as a saint of equal stature to the apostles. Ugolino, who had recently been named Pope Gregory IX, granted Elias' request. The two then set out to construct a shrine for Francis' body in Assisi. At the Pope's encouragement, donations poured in from all over Christendom for a basilica. The construction of the basilica was part of Elias' plan to make the order of friars minor the most renowned body in the Church and Assisi a centre of pilgrimage for the whole world.⁴⁸⁶

Elias and Ugolino then worked together to re-define the rule and the Franciscan order overall in ways they could not have done while Francis was still alive. In 1230, Gregory issued a bull *Quo elongati*, which declared that the friars were no longer bound to literally observe the vow of absolute poverty. They were permitted to 'use' property such as housing and books, so long as all their belongings were technically in the 'possession' of the Holy See. *Quo elongati* freed the friars to formally organize themselves as a learned order like the Dominicans. The Franciscans began to acquire convents, and each convent was appointed a lector to oversee the new friars' ministerial education. The Pope recognized this education as the equivalent of an undergraduate course of the university, so that gifted students could proceed to higher education at one of the universities, and then become lectors at one of the convents.

The *literati*, or the members of the order that had entered with previous clerical or scholarly training and supported the endeavours of Elias and Ugolino, did not feel that they undermined Franciscan ideals by institutionalizing the order. To

⁴⁸⁵ See "The Later Rule," in *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1982), 136-45.

the contrary, they claimed that they upheld those ideals by adapting them to the needs of a growing order. As the *literati* began to overtake the order from within, with the reinforcement of the Pope, the ‘spiritual’ members that had been a part of the order from its early days began to protest the relaxation of Francis’ standards.⁴⁸⁷ The more the *literati* qualified Francis’ commands, so that they did not have to follow them, the more the internal factions became pronounced. Yet the Pope would not hear the complaints of the spirituals. In 1231, he issued another bull, *Nimis iniquia*, which gave the friars the authority to perform the duties of the parish clergy and to take from them whatever they needed to conduct their ministries.

Since Francis’ death, several men had served terms as Minister General of the Franciscan order. In 1237, John of Parma was selected to fill this role. Although an educated man, John was a spiritual, who was fully committed to a life of poverty and simplicity. Together with the spirituals, John was an avid proponent of the theology of the Cistercian monk Joachim of Fiore (1132-1202). Joachim had claimed to receive a special insight into the meaning of Scripture. He taught that there are three stages in the history that correlate to the three Persons of the Trinity.

The first stage, he said, is recorded in the Old Testament and is the dispensation of the Father. The second stage is recounted in the New Testament and includes the first thousand years of the existence of the Church, during which time the world was under the dispensation of the Son. In the third stage, Joachim foretold that the Church would become corrupt, but that two new religious orders would be founded. Members of these orders would live in poverty and would “inaugurate the new era in which there would be no need for authoritative institutions since men would now live according to the spirit of God.”⁴⁸⁸

Most spirituals believed that St. Francis had ushered in the age of the Spirit. Consequently, they considered the literal imitation of Francis to be the very essence of the spiritual life. As much as possible, John wanted to restore the original simplicity of the order. However, he had come too late. By his time, the Franciscan order was already embroiled in ecclesial politics and in the life of the new

⁴⁸⁶ John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, 98.

⁴⁸⁷ C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars*, 29.

universities. By 1219, the Franciscans had arrived in Paris, where they set up a house on the outskirts of the city. The Dominicans had already been in town for two years and had founded their own training school with regular lectures and disputations. When they first arrived, the Franciscan friars had no plans to set up a school. For some time, they attended lectures at the university itself. By 1229, however, they had started their own programme.

Around this same time, members of the university faculty began to join the order. When they did so, they transferred their students and support from the university to the Franciscan school. This caused no little controversy amongst the university masters, who felt that they were being deprived of collegial support, students, income, and prestige. Nevertheless, the friar school continued to grow to such an extent that King Louis donated an expansive convent in central Paris, where the friars moved in 1231.⁴⁸⁹ In 1245, Pope Innocent IV issued a bull *Ordinem vestrum*, which granted friars the power to hold money not only for necessity, but also for the sake of convenience. His goal in doing this was to abolish any obstacle to the growth of the Franciscan order and the education of their recruits.

As privileges poured upon the friars from the Roman Curia, the university masters grew increasingly infuriated. The friars were given all the rights and powers of university officials, yet they were exempt from all the attendant responsibilities because they were directly responsible to the Holy See. The breaking point came in 1250, when the Pope decreed that any friar who finished a masters degree in theology should automatically be awarded a license to teach by the university chancellor. The masters responded by passing a statute to counter the papal mandate, in what was effectively an attempt to preserve their own jobs. This statute stated that only one master from each of the friar schools would be permitted to take a post in the university faculty.

After 1250, by which point the Franciscan order had reached a membership of approximately 30,000, the masters set out on nothing short of a quest “to discredit

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁴⁸⁹ Concerning this convent, see, J. Bougerol’s *Introduction to the Writings of St. Bonaventure* (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild, 1964), 13.

the friars and drive them out of the schools altogether.”⁴⁹⁰ Their efforts came to a head in 1253, when they declared a strike and ordered all teaching to cease. The friar instructors on the university faculty, who were not subject to university discipline, refused to obey the university mandate and were therefore justifiably expelled from the consortium. The strike was followed by a decree that no one could act as a master in any university faculty until he had taken an oath to obey university statutes.⁴⁹¹

The masters’ next course of action was to attack the mendicant friars on theoretical grounds. The Franciscan friars in particular were charged with upholding the opinions of the Joachites, which were condemned as heretical in 1256. Countless tracts were written attacking them as false teachers. Soon, pamphlets appeared that challenged the mendicant way of life more generally, especially the Franciscan vow of absolute poverty, which was described as dangerous, impractical, and inimical to the faith.⁴⁹² An all-out pamphlet war over the issue of evangelical poverty ensued. It became dangerous for the friars to appear in the streets, and on several occasions, students were injured or killed in riots. Eventually, the friars had to appeal to the new Pope Alexander IV to authorize their ministry.

With the charges that were being levelled by the university masters in view, the Pope realized that he could not allow a self-proclaimed Joachite like John of Parma to remain head of the Franciscan order. By 1257, it had become obvious that a new Minister General was needed, one who could resolve the tensions between rival factions within the order and alleviate the situation with the university masters. For that job, Bonaventure was unanimously chosen.

THE FRANCISCAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION (1220-1257)

In the late 1230’s, Pope Gregory IX commissioned a Franciscan theological Summa, which would come to be called the *Summa fratris Alexandri* or the *Summa minorum*. In view of the challenges the order faced during this decade, one can see why he saw fit to do this. Although the masters looked unfavourably upon the

⁴⁹⁰ John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, 126.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 130.

presence of all mendicant friars in the university setting, they were especially suspicious of the friars minor. Unlike the Dominicans who had a strong sense of intellectual purpose from their inception, the Franciscans came with no scholarly identity but to shun scholarly endeavours. In order to sustain the life of the Franciscan order in the University of Paris, Ugolino saw the need to define a distinctly Franciscan intellectual tradition. The Franciscan Summa was to achieve this by translating Francis' spiritual vision into theological and philosophical doctrines and by grounding the account in authoritative sources.⁴⁹³

The man chosen to oversee the project was Alexander of Hales, one of the most sophisticated and innovative theological minds of the day. In 1220, Alexander had been given a chair in the university faculty of theology. At that time, he became largely responsible for the education of the Franciscan friars that attended lectures in theology. As the most celebrated theological scholar at the university of Paris, Alexander greatly impressed his Franciscan students. Yet they also left a deep impression on him. Eventually, he concluded that the Franciscan outlook was "not only compatible with his theological positions but [also] reinforced them."⁴⁹⁴ In 1236, he decided to join the order himself, and thence became regent master of the Franciscan school.⁴⁹⁵

Although Alexander supervised work on the Franciscan Summa and gave his name to it, he was not solely responsible for its production. He collaborated with his Franciscan colleague Jean de la Rochelle. Other Franciscan masters contributed as well, and when both Alexander and Jean died in 1245, Bonaventure may have been among those that gave the work its finishing touches, as late as 1257. Even though Alexander and Jean did not personally write every section of the Summa, research has shown that the treatise represents a compilation and partial reworking of works mainly written by Alexander of Hales and Jean de la Rochelle.⁴⁹⁶

Research has further demonstrated that the content of the Summa, not to mention the original writings of Alexander and Jean, bears the mark of Avicenna's

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 328.

⁴⁹⁴ Kenan B. Osborne, *The History of Franciscan Theology*, 12.

⁴⁹⁵ Raphael M. Huber, O.F.M., "Alexander of Hales, O.F.M.," *Franciscan Studies* 5 (1945): 353.

⁴⁹⁶ Dag Hasse, *Avicenna's 'De anima'*, 51.

influence. In his study of the reception of Anselm's argument amongst thirteenth-century Franciscans and Dominicans, for instance, Scott Matthews has shown that Alexander of Hales recast the argument as an *a priori* proof God's existence in his Sentence Commentary and has traced this use of the argument into the Franciscan Summa. According to Matthews, Alexander's goal in appropriating the Avicennian proof was to give an account of the intuitive awareness of God Francis always enjoyed.⁴⁹⁷ That 'habitual' awareness of God, as the Summists called it, entailed the innate knowledge of Being and its trinity of transcendental properties: unity, truth, and goodness.⁴⁹⁸ It was in virtue of the knowledge of the transcendentals that the intellect was able to abstract accurate ideas of reality and see creatures, with Francis, as perfect reflections of God's nature.⁴⁹⁹

Matthews regards the use of Anselm's argument and the theory of knowledge that underlies it by early Franciscan masters as a polemical attempt to prove that the Franciscan mindset, far from being opposed to the acquisition of knowledge, is the very precondition of valid intellectual activity.⁵⁰⁰ Although he shows no signs of awareness that the theory of knowledge he finds in the writings of the Summists was derived from Avicenna, he rightly stresses that the theory was developed in an effort to transform Francis' intimate experience of God and his perfect insight into the nature of reality into a normative cognitive standard.

In his study of the late Medieval reception of Avicenna's *De anima*, Dag Hasse demonstrates that the views on knowledge such as Matthews found in the writings of the Summists were in fact inspired by Avicenna. Focusing on Jean de la Rochelle, Hasse shows that the scholar clearly advocated the Avicennian theory of four intellects in his *Summa de anima*, which was one of the main sources for the Franciscan Summa.⁵⁰¹ Jean was also one of the foremost proponents of the Avicennian doctrine of God as the Agent Intellect, Hasse notes.⁵⁰² On the basis of passages like *Soliloquia* 1.8.15, Jean felt justified in imputing the doctrine of the

⁴⁹⁷ Scott Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition: Anselm's Argument and the Friars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 74.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 68.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 57.

⁵⁰¹ Dag Hasse, *Avicenna's 'De anima'*, 195, ff.

separate Agent Intellect to Augustine.⁵⁰³ Although Hasse acknowledges that it is unclear whether all the authors of the Franciscan Summa accepted this doctrine, and it is unlikely that Alexander of Hales himself did so, he shows that Jean's general appropriation of the Avicennian doctrine of four intellects travelled through to the Franciscan Summa. Another scholar has discussed the Franciscan preference for an Avicennian doctrine of abstraction and the Franciscan appropriation of Avicenna's dualist theory of the two faces of the soul.⁵⁰⁴

The research mentioned above reveals that early Franciscans were interested in employing the conceptual resources the Arab had to offer, which promised to help them give an account of reality and human knowledge as Francis understood it. In incorporating Avicenna's ideas, Franciscans transformed Avicennian positions into philosophical principles consistent with Franciscan spirituality. When they went to articulate their principles, both Matthews and Hasse acknowledge, they did so with turns of phrase they borrowed from Augustine and Anselm. They were able to 'find' their vision in traditional forms of argumentation because scholastic methodology left room for redefinition. The invocation of such great spiritual authorities was, to Matthews' mind especially, a deliberate polemical move on the part of early Franciscan authors to immunize their order against external threats.

In his groundbreaking work on late Medieval thought, Etienne Gilson had already pointed out that Franciscans developed a new method of interpreting Augustine in accordance with Avicenna.⁵⁰⁵ With the exception of the doctrine of God as Agent Intellect, however, Gilson thought the Avicennian interpretation of Augustine legitimate. He referred to the heterodox philosophy of the Franciscans that espoused the doctrine of the separate Agent Intellect, including Jean de la Rochelle, Roger Bacon, John Peckham, and Roger Marston, as 'Avicennized

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 210, ff.

⁵⁰⁴ See J. Rohmer, "Sur la doctrine franciscaine des deux faces de l'âme," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen-Age* 2 (1927): 73-7; idem., "La théorie de l'abstraction dans l'école franciscaine d'Alexandre de Halès à Jean Peckham," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen-Age* 3 (1928): 105-84.

⁵⁰⁵ Etienne Gilson, "Pourquoi saint Thomas a critiqué saint Augustin," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen-Age* 1 (1926-7): 5-127; idem., "Les sources Greco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen-Age* 4 (1929): 5-149; "Roger

Augustinianism'. The Franciscans that rejected this doctrine, even while drawing on the rest of Avicenna's thought, by contrast, produced an Augustinianism which he regarded as the most precise version of Augustinianism that had been formulated to date. For Gilson, Franciscan thought was the apex of Augustinian thought.

Gilson's research has greatly facilitated the effort made here to identify the Avicennian elements that became distinctive features of Franciscan thought. What has been said thus far, however, should suffice to arouse the suspicion that the intellectual tradition the early Franciscans influenced by Avicenna founded, albeit in the name of Augustine and Anselm, actually signals a departure from the longstanding Augustinian tradition. In the following chapter on Bonaventure, I will seek to substantiate what I have suggested here.

Marston: un cas d'augustinisme avicennisant," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen-Age* 8 (1933): 37-42.

IV. BONAVENTURE

(1221-1274)

Introduction

In this chapter, my purpose is to demonstrate that Bonaventure is not an Augustinian with respect to the theory of knowledge by divine illumination. The main reason why I want to distinguish Bonaventure from Augustine in this regard is that doing so will help me explain why Franciscans working in the generation after Bonaventure rejected Augustine's illumination theory, as Bonaventure presented it. According to the scholarly consensus, Bonaventure is not only an Augustinian, but also the last and best representative of traditional Medieval Augustinian thought.⁵⁰⁶ His illumination theory is commonly described as the hallmark of his Augustinianism.⁵⁰⁷ Moreover, his place at the end of the line of Medieval Augustinian thinkers is confirmed by his use of Anselm's ontological argument.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁶ Effrem Bettoni, O.F.M., *Bonaventure*, trans. Angelus Gambatesta (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 19; Charles Carpenter, O.F.M., *Theology as the Road to Holiness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), v; Ewert H. Cousins, O.F.M., *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), 2; Patrick Robert, O.F.M., "Le problem de la philosophie bonaventurienne: Aristotelisme Neoplatonisant ou Augustinisme?" *Laval Theologique et Philosophique* 6 (1950): 145-63. Others in the early generations of Medieval scholars who affirmed the Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought in one way or another include Leo Veuthey, Franz Ehrle, F.J. Thonnard, Pierre Mandonnet, and Frederick Copleston.

⁵⁰⁷ Effrem Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 96, 125; J. Guy Bougerol, O.F.M., *Introduction*, 31-4; Leonard Bowman, "The Development of the Doctrine of the Agent Intellect in the Franciscan School," *The Modern Schoolman* 50 (1973): 251; Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 79-93; F.C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy* (London: Methuen & Co., 1972), 161; Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 2; Theodore Crowley, O.F.M., "Illumination and Certitude," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274-1974*, vol. 2 (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1973); Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8, 20-22; Maurice De Wulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman's, Green, & Co., 1909), 283-9; Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Iltyd Trethowan & Francis Joseph Sheed (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1965), 387; Publio Restrepo Gonzalez, O.F.M., "Una fundamentacion Bonaventuriana para la epistemologia de las ciencias: la teoria de la luz o iluminismo," *Franciscanum* 38 (1996): 309-17; Bernard A. Gendreau, "The Quest for Certainty in Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 21 (1961): 104-227; M. Hurley, "Illumination According to St. Bonaventure," *Gregorianum* 32:3 (1951): 401; Ilia Delio, O.S.F., *Simply Bonaventure* (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2001), 103; Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., introduction to *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ* by Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), 55-9; Jay Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*," in *Divine and Create Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, by Wayne Hellmann (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 2001), 223; C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars*, 148; John Lynch, *The Theory of Knowledge of Vital du Four* (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1972), 152; Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 1, 111-250; Thomas R. Mathias, "Bonaventurian Ways to God through Reason," *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976): 193; P.J.

While there are certainly scholars that recognize the Seraphic Doctor's distinctiveness as a Franciscan thinker and that celebrate the uniqueness of his intellectual synthesis, few would deny that he is fundamentally an Augustinian, and an Augustinian on fundamentals. In fact, where the uniquely Franciscan features of Bonaventure's thought are underscored, the scholarly habit is to affirm that Augustine is the inspiration behind the views he presents and that Bonaventure's doctrines give full and final expression to Augustine's views.

The prevalence of these opinions has much to do with the fact that Etienne "Gilson's image of Bonaventure gained something of a classic stature"⁵⁰⁹ in modern scholarship. Where some of Gilson's contemporaries interpreted Bonaventure as an 'incipient Thomist', Gilson himself discerned the distinctive spirit of Bonaventure's philosophy.⁵¹⁰ Noticing the Seraphic Doctor's tendency to employ the terms of Augustine, Gilson formed the opinion that Bonaventure not only used Augustine's terms, but also utilized them in the same sense the bishop had originally intended.

McAndrew, "The Theory of Divine Illumination in Saint Bonaventura," *The New Scholasticism* 6 (1932): 39; John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, 246-7; Timothy B. Noone, "The Franciscans and Epistemology: Reflections on the Roles of Bonaventure and Scotus," in *Medieval Masters*, ed. R.E. Houser (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1999), 63-90; Tony Overton, "St. Bonaventure's Illumination Theory of Knowledge: The Reconciliation of Aristotle, Pseudo-Dionysius and Augustine," *Miscellanea Franciscana* 88 (1988): 108-21; Joseph Owens, "Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 450-1; Philip L. Reynolds, "Threefold Existence and Illumination in St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1982): 190-215; Fritz-Joachim von Rintelen, "Comprension del ser creatural en san Agustin y en san Buenaventura," *Augustinus* 19 (1974): 189-96; John Rist, *Augustine*, 78; Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian*, 106; Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 102-36; Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M., "The Schoolman," in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University*, 207-8; Pelayo Mateos de Zamayon, O.F.M., "Teoria del conocimiento segun san Buenaventura: La iluminacion," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274-1974*; Grover A. Zinn, "Book and Word: The Victorine Background of Bonaventure's Use of Symbols," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274-1974*, 144.

⁵⁰⁸ Gilson draws a line of conceptual continuity from Augustine to Anselm, Bonaventure, Scotus, and eventually, Descartes and Pascal in *Augustine*, 11, ff. and in other writings. On the supposed connection between Anselm and Bonaventure, see F.C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy*, 166; Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 11; Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 126, ff.; Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 114; Jean-Robert Pouchet, "Le *Proslogion* de sainte Anselme et l'esprit de saint Bonaventura," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274-1974*, vol. 2, 103-24; Ewert Cousins, "St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, and the Movement of Thought in the Thirteenth Century," in *Bonaventure and Aquinas: Enduring Philosophers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 9.

⁵⁰⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventura* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 123. Ratzinger lists numerous major Medieval scholars who accepted Gilson's views on Bonaventure, including Longpre, Thonnard, Tavard, Rosenmoeller, Robert, and Veuthy.

⁵¹⁰ For example, De Wulf in his *History of Medieval Philosophy* and Fernand Van Steenberghen in *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*, trans. Leonard Johnston (New York: Humanities Press, 1970).

Professor Gilson went so far as to suggest that the Seraphic Doctor explained more elaborately than Augustine himself what the terms meant.⁵¹¹ His concept of Bonaventure as the last and best Augustinian thus rested on the assumption that Augustine was a proto-Bonaventurian.

On Gilson's account, Augustine never developed a systematic theory of knowledge and illumination, but mainly alluded to the divine light in references that are scattered throughout his writings.⁵¹² Not until Bonaventure was Augustine's understanding of illumination clearly expressed. According to Gilson, Bonaventure sought to codify a genuinely Augustinian doctrine of knowledge in order to fortify the longstanding Augustinian tradition against the challenge that the influx of Aristotle's writings posed to its authoritative status.

Admittedly, Gilson has a case. The Augustinian arguments Bonaventure invokes do seem to accommodate the meanings he assigns to them. In other words, it is possible to 'find' Bonaventure's vision in Augustine, at least so long as the primary focus is on what both authors say as opposed to what they mean when they say the same things. Because the arguments of Bonaventure and Augustine sound so similar when they are taken at face value, it is unlikely to be immediately obvious to the reader far removed from the intellectual context in which the two theologians worked that they do in fact differ. For this reason, I have argued that it is essential to attend to the theological doctrines that imbue philosophical terms with meaning.

In the late nineteenth century, Theodore De Régnon called attention to the fact that two distinct lines of Trinitarian thought emerged in the late Medieval West. He drew one line from Richard of St. Victor and more remotely Pseudo-Dionysius through Alexander of Hales to Bonaventure, and another from Augustine to Anselm, Lombard, Albert, and Aquinas.⁵¹³ Although Michel René Barnes has recently criticized De Régnon's characterization of Eastern and Western Trinitarian doctrines, the latter's observations about the two distinct traditions that emerged within the

⁵¹¹ Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 481-90, *passim*.

⁵¹² See also Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 77 and Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 1, 247.

⁵¹³ Theodore De Régnon, *Études de théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité*, 3 vols. (Paris: Vrin, 1892-98).

Western tradition itself have gained wide recognition in recent years.⁵¹⁴ A straightforward reading of the relevant texts confirms that Franciscans like Bonaventure replaced Augustine's Trinitarian theology with Richard of St. Victor's, while Thomas Aquinas upheld the Augustinian tradition.

Though many scholars acknowledge this, they continue to affirm the Augustinian nature of Bonaventure's philosophical views and the proto-Bonaventurian character of Augustine's. Perhaps this is because the new research on Augustine's thought has not been brought into conversation with research projects on Bonaventure.⁵¹⁵ In the first chapter of this work, I presupposed much of that research as I showed how Augustine derives his illumination theory from his Trinitarian theology through a series of steps. In the present chapter, I do the same for Bonaventure, explaining how his account of the created order, the *imago dei*, the effects of the fall and redemption on the image, the process of conforming to the image, and finally, divine illumination, follow from his description of God's Triune nature.

By evaluating the philosophy of Bonaventure as a function of his Trinitarian theology in the light of the conclusions reached in the chapter on Augustine, I aim to show that the Seraphic Doctor does not mean what Augustine meant by Augustine's own terms and metaphors, above all, illumination. Though for the most part, I do not question Gilson's renderings of Bonaventure's doctrines themselves, I do seek to demonstrate that those doctrines are quite unlike the doctrines as Augustine formulated them. Far from being preoccupied with 'rescuing' the Augustinian tradition, Bonaventure was exploiting scholastic methodology for the sake of lending authoritative support to Franciscan views, in hopes of firmly establishing the newly founded Franciscan intellectual tradition.

⁵¹⁴ See Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 51, 100; Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition* (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 2008); Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 40; Elizabeth Dreyer, "Bonaventure the Franciscan: An Affective Spirituality," in *Spiritualities of the Heart*, ed. Annice Callahan (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990), 36; Zachary Hayes, introduction in *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* by Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute 2000), 18.

⁵¹⁵ See the aforementioned titles by Lewis Ayres, Michel René Barnes, Luigi Gioia, Anna Williams, and Rowan Williams.

While the chapter on Augustine built on new studies in the bishop's thought, the project of differentiating Bonaventure from Augustine I undertake here has very little precedent.⁵¹⁶ Admittedly, then, the project is in its early stages, and for this reason, I make no claim to say all that needs to be said about Bonaventure's system, much less its relationship or lack thereof to Augustine. My more modest goal in this context is to present a new way of thinking about Bonaventure in anticipation of the work others will do to fill out the picture of him as the foremost promulgator of classic Franciscan thought.

In his first theological work, a commentary on Lombard's Sentences, Bonaventure confesses that his allegiances lie first with St. Francis of Assisi. The Seraphic Doctor states in his commentary that his primary objective as an author is to bolster the opinions he learned from his Franciscan teachers, above all his 'master and father' Alexander of Hales.⁵¹⁷ In his life of Francis or *Legenda major* (1261), Bonaventure later explains the reason why his commitment to the order runs so deep. As a child, he had contracted a severe illness, and as he lay on his deathbed, his mother vowed to commit his life to Francis if he survived.⁵¹⁸ From the moment of his miraculous recovery forward, Bonaventure devoted himself to Francis. In 1243, he took the Franciscan habit and began theological studies under Alexander of Hales, who is on record as having said of his student that, "it seemed as though Adam had never sinned in him."⁵¹⁹

By 1248, Bonaventure had earned his bachelor's in Scripture, and he proceeded to lecture on the Bible for the next two years. From 1250-52 he lectured on Lombard's Sentences and composed his commentary to satisfy the requirements for the degree of master in theology, which he earned in 1253, the same year he assumed responsibilities as regent master of the Franciscan school in Paris.

⁵¹⁶ Jacob Schmutz, "Causalité et nature pure," 226, ff. and John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle*, 96-7.

⁵¹⁷ Bonaventure, *Commentaria in quatuor libros sententiarum, liber secundus*, in "The Commentary Project" [at Franciscan-archive.org and on diskette], ed. Alexis Bugnolo (Mansfield: The Franciscan Archive, 2006-7), preface. The editors of the Franciscan Archive have produced a digital version of many of Bonaventure's works, including his Commentary, which features the Latin text of the Quaracchi edition of Bonaventure's *Opera omnia* and a side-by-side English translation.

⁵¹⁸ Bonaventure, *The Life of St. Francis (Legenda major)*, in *Bonaventure*, ed. Ewert Cousins (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1978), ch. 3.

⁵¹⁹ Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 34.

Although both he and Aquinas should have been appointed positions in the faculty of theology at the University of Paris upon the completion of their degrees, as per the papal mandate, the university masters would not allow them to fill their posts until 1257, when the Pope ordered them to admit the friar scholars to the consortium.

In the meantime, Bonaventure occupied himself directing the school for the friars minor and producing works such as his famous sermon *Christus unus omnium Magister* (1253), the *Quaestiones disputatae de perfectione evangelica* (1254), *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi* (1254), and *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio trinitatis* (1255). In the same year he was allowed to take his position in the university theology faculty, Bonaventure was elected Minister General of the Franciscan order. His sudden election curtailed his academic career and made him responsible for reckoning with the problems that were threatening the survival of his order at the time. Most of those problems had to do with the fact that the spirituals and the university academics were still not willing to accept the scholarly status of the order.

Admittedly, the spirituals had a valid case. Bonaventure's predecessors had not been adequate to the undoubtedly monumental task of devising and enforcing a standard code of educational and ministerial practice for the large international order. For this reason, many Franciscans began to abuse the papal privileges they received to facilitate ministry and study by leading lackadaisical and self-indulgent lives. This development in the early history of the order reinforced the spirituals' point that a life of study is not conducive to the life Francis instructed his followers to lead.

Bonaventure therefore made it his first task to reform the order. As part of this effort, he developed a theological training program for Franciscan students. While the 'horse sized' *Summa fratris Alexandri* was accessible as a comprehensive theological encyclopaedia and reference tool, it was not the brief and coherent synthesis of the Franciscan spiritual vision the average initiate needed to prepare for ministry. The *Breviloquium* (1257) was just such a concise summary of key Franciscan doctrines, as Bonaventure had presented them in the Sentence Commentary. As such, this brief work represents the Seraphic Doctor's counterpart to Aquinas' voluminous *Summa Theologiae*.

Even after Bonaventure had standardized theological education and taken measures to prevent friars from taking undue advantage of their privileges, he had more to do in order to convince the spiritual party that scholarly life and all that it included, namely, the ‘use’ of large convents and libraries, was compatible with the ideal of poverty put forward by St. Francis. He did this initially in his *Quaestiones disputatae de perfectione evangelica*. In that work, his line of contention is that poverty is a means to learning humility, never an end in itself.⁵²⁰ On the grounds that the crucified Christ is both the exemplar of humility and the wisdom of God, and that study is the pursuit of wisdom, Bonaventure concludes that the life of study does not undermine but fulfil the Franciscan ideal of poverty.

That ideal is precisely the one the university masters were calling into question in their efforts to undermine the legitimacy of the friars’ participation in the life of the university. When he addressed the masters, Bonaventure’s strategy was to show that Franciscan ideals were not only conducive to intellectual life, but also necessary for its success. In composing works such as the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259), *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273), and *De reductione artium ad theologiam* (c. 1273), in which he qualifies the Franciscan vision so that it entails academic endeavours, Bonaventure did not feel he betrayed Francis, but adapted the poverello’s vision so that it could be realized in a new era.⁵²¹ In the new phase of Franciscan history that Bonaventure saw himself as ushering in, the Franciscans would continue to play a key role in salvation history as they counteracted the deficiencies of the Church and revived true spirituality.⁵²² The success of the Seraphic Doctor’s efforts to confirm the student status of the order of friars minor is one main reason why he has been called the order’s second founder.

⁵²⁰ Bonaventure, *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection* (*Quaestiones disputatae de perfectione evangelica*), trans. Thomas Reist, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 2008), 1.1.

⁵²¹ See Anton C. Pegis, “St. Bonaventure, St. Francis, & Philosophy,” *Medieval Studies* 15 (1953): 1-13.

⁵²² John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, 151.

Trinity

For all intents and purposes, Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine had no rival in the West until the twelfth century. In the third quarter of that century, however, the mystical mind of Richard of St. Victor developed "a new and original style of Trinitarian reflection."⁵²³ Like the other scholars at the Augustinian abbey of St. Victor, a renowned centre of learning in twelfth-century Paris, Richard was well acquainted with the works of Augustine, not to mention Anselm. Along with the general membership of his school, however, he was also keen on appropriating the insights of the sixth-century mystic Pseudo-Dionysius. Even though Richard took Augustine's trinity of 'lover, beloved, love' as his conceptual point of departure, he ultimately articulated a Trinitarian doctrine that widely diverged from the tradition of theological reflection Augustine had founded.

The mystical and voluntarist orientation of Richard's thought greatly appealed to Alexander of Hales.⁵²⁴ When Alexander determined to adopt Richard's Trinitarian doctrine, he set a precedent for all Franciscan Trinitarian thought in the future.⁵²⁵ Bonaventure follows Alexander who follows Richard who echoes Anselm when he speaks of the Triune God as the Supreme Good.⁵²⁶ With Richard, however, the Seraphic Doctor looks to Dionysius to explain what this claim means. On the grounds that a Good that is contained is not genuinely good, Dionysius had argued that God is self-diffusive by definition.⁵²⁷ For Dionysius, in other words, the goodness of the Good lies in its active or dynamic nature, that is, in its power to reproduce itself.

On the basis of Dionysius' contention that divine goodness is fundamentally self-duplicating and self-giving, Richard concludes that love is the supreme content

⁵²³ Zachary Hayes, introduction to *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity (DQMT)* by Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 2000), 15.

⁵²⁴ For a detailed analysis of Richards Trinitarian doctrine, see Nico den Bok, *Communicating the Most High: A Systematic Study of Person and Trinity in the Theology of Richard of St. Victor* (Paris: Brepols, 1996).

⁵²⁵ See Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., "Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology," in *The History of Franciscan Theology* (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 2007), 28; see also Zachary Hayes, introduction to *DQMT*, 13-24.

⁵²⁶ Zachary Hayes, introduction to *DQMT*, 19.

⁵²⁷ Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Divine Names," in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), 639B, ff.

of the Good, and Bonaventure does likewise.⁵²⁸ This conclusion founds the efforts of both to argue for a plurality of divine Persons, since love is something that must be shared by at least two parties. Neither Richard nor Bonaventure thinks it appropriate to affirm as Augustine does that the third member of the Trinity simply *is* the love exchanged between the first two Persons, however. Wanting to establish that the nature and measure of the love in question is exactly the same, and thus supremely perfect, they contend that the first two Persons of the Trinity direct their love towards one and the same third party. Where two love a third Person in harmony, they write, there is not the *dilectio* of Augustine, but *condilectio*.⁵²⁹

Bonaventure speaks of the Father as the monarchical principle of the Trinity, the fontal source (*plenitudo fontalis*) of divine love from which the others flow. He thus emphasizes the primacy of the Father to a degree that is “foreign to the thought of either Augustine or Aquinas and similar to the theology of the classical Greek Fathers.”⁵³⁰ The Seraphic Doctor affirms the maxim of the *Liber de causis* that what is first is most fecund.⁵³¹ From this point, he infers that God’s self-communication is perfect and complete. When He gives Himself, the Father holds nothing in reserve.⁵³² Since the Father is the first principle (*principium primum*⁵³³), Bonaventure further argues that His self-giving is non-compulsory, a totally voluntary and gratuitous overflow of divine love.⁵³⁴

In Bonaventure’s words, the Son is the exact likeness, mirror image, word, or exemplar of the Father.⁵³⁵ In short, He is the objective expression of the Father’s love. For Bonaventure, the relationship between the Father and the Son is the first relation that becomes the basis for all other relations, and in this case, the relation between the Son and the Spirit. The Son receives the fountain fullness of the Father’s love and passes it on exactly as He receives it. The Spirit simply stands as

⁵²⁸ Richard of St. Victor, “Book Three of the Trinity,” trans. Grover A. Zinn (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1979), ch. 1-2; Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber primus*, 2.1.2.1.

⁵²⁹ Zachary Hayes, introduction to *DQMT*, 16.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, 42; Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber primus*, 2.1.2.1.

⁵³² Bonaventure, *The Soul’s Journey into God (Itinerarium mentis in Deum)* in Bonaventure, ed. Ewert Cousins, 6.2.

⁵³³ Bonaventure, *DQMT*, 2.1, conclusion.

⁵³⁴ *Idem.*, *Breviloquium*, ed. Dominic V. Monti, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 2005), 1.1.3.

the fullest possible manifestation of the love that proceeds from the Father and the Son.⁵³⁶ Given His role as the efficient cause of divine love, Bonaventure appropriates the trait of unity to the Father, that of truth to the Son, who is the formal or exemplary cause, and that of goodness to the Spirit, who is the final cause of God's love.⁵³⁷

Bonaventure summarizes these teachings when he describes the Father as the Person of the Trinity who produces but is not produced; the Son as He who both is produced and produces; and the Spirit as the one that is produced but does not produce.⁵³⁸ In this account, the First Person is utterly active, the third Person is completely passive, and the Second Person is both active and passive. For this reason, Bonaventure states that the Son is the very centre of Trinitarian life. Because He has something in common with both the Father and the Spirit, who themselves have nothing in common, the Son is distinct from the other two and yet is uniquely suited to unite them. He is the image of the Trinity precisely because He shares something with the first and third Persons and makes those irreconcilable opposites coincide so as to sum up in His own Person what the three of them are.⁵³⁹

Following Dionysius, Bonaventure illustrates the inner life of the Trinity with the picture of a circle.⁵⁴⁰ The Father is both the start and the end point on that circle. All perfect things, Bonaventure writes, have a beginning, middle, and an end, and in the most perfect Being, it is fitting that the beginning is also the end.⁵⁴¹ The Son is the midpoint or centre on the circle that begins and ends with the Father's love. He receives that love, and when He expresses what He received, He closes the circle in the Spirit.

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 3.8.

⁵³⁶ On double procession, see *Commentaria, liber primus*, 11.1; see also John F. Quinn, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in St. Bonaventure's Theology," *Franciscan Studies* 33 (1973): 273-84.

⁵³⁷ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, 6.1-2.

⁵³⁸ Idem., *Collations on the Six Days (Collationes in Hexaemeron)*, ed. Jose De Vinck (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970), 1.14.

⁵³⁹ See Ewert Cousins, "The Coincidence of Opposites in the Christology of St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 28 (1968): 27-45.

⁵⁴⁰ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber tertius*, 1.2.1; Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, 712 D-713D.

⁵⁴¹ Idem., *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 1.2.1.2.

The Victorine account of the Trinity appealed to Franciscans like Bonaventure because it allowed them to capture Francis' concept of God as a good and loving Father and to emphasize the self-emptying and humble or 'impoverished' nature of His love.⁵⁴² Additionally, it enabled them to describe the divine nature as fundamentally dynamic, in keeping with the Franciscan tendency to prioritize the active over the contemplative life, love over knowledge. On Gilson's view, such voluntarism is consistent with Augustine's emphasis on the guiding power of love.⁵⁴³

While Bonaventure takes his cues from Alexander on most matters relating to Trinitarian doctrine, he stressed the centrality of Christ in a way that was unprecedented.⁵⁴⁴ Although Christocentrism was latent in the Victorine doctrine of the Trinity and indeed in Francis' crucifixion, the development of a Christocentric outlook "comes entirely from Bonaventure's own world of thought and can be traced to no outside influence."⁵⁴⁵ Early signs of Bonaventure's Christocentric perspective can be detected in his Sentence Commentary and in the sermon *Christus unus omnium Magister*.

As new challenges arose for the Franciscan order over the course of Bonaventure's career, he continued to appeal to the primacy of Christ in his efforts to address them. He invoked Christocentricity, for instance, in the attempt to dissociate the Franciscan order from the heretical Trinitarian teachings of Joachim of Fiore. Most of the spiritual Franciscans accepted Joachim's view that a prophetic man, whom they took to be Francis, would initiate an age of the Spirit that would surpass the age of the Son. Bonaventure also saw Francis as an eschatological figure and was highly sympathetic to the belief that the Franciscan order had a vital role to play in preparing the world for the final phase of its history. Yet he was well aware of the unorthodox implications of the claim that the life of Francis rather than that of Christ

⁵⁴² Zachary Hayes, introduction to *DQMT*, 32.

⁵⁴³ Etienne Gilson, *Augustine*, 238. Others that believe Bonaventure learns his voluntarism from Augustine include Ilia Delio, "Revisiting the Franciscan Doctrine of Christ," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 13; Clement O'Donnell, O.F.M., "Voluntarism in Franciscan Philosophy," *Franciscan Studies* 23:4 (1942): 397-410; Ewert H. Cousins, O.F.M., "God as Dynamic in Bonaventure and Contemporary Thought" in *American Catholic Philosophical Association* 48 (1974): 136-48; Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 41.

⁵⁴⁴ See Ilia Delio, "Theology, Metaphysics, and the Centrality of Christ," *Theological Studies* 68 (2007): 254, ff.; Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 65.

⁵⁴⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History*, 109.

signals the culmination of salvation history. He separated Franciscans from Joachim's teaching on the spiritual age by affirming that Christ, who is the literal centre of the Trinity, also stands at the centre of human history, such that His gospel is eternal and irreplaceable.⁵⁴⁶

In this and other ways, Bonaventure extrapolated the conceptual repercussions of his Christocentric perspective over the course of his academic and ministerial career. As he spelled out the corollaries of the Victorine doctrine in innovative ways, Bonaventure gave mature expression to the Trinitarian theology of his Franciscan predecessors and popularized it.⁵⁴⁷ Indeed, it was the Seraphic Doctor's version of the doctrine, with all its emphasis on the primacy of Christ, which would be handed down to later Franciscans such as Duns Scotus. For reasons like these, scholars have recently qualified De Régnon's account of the history of Trinitarian doctrine, insisting that Bonaventure rather than Richard deserves the credit for founding a second tradition of Western Trinitarian theology.⁵⁴⁸

Creation in God's Image

THE NATURAL ORDER

When God created the world, Bonaventure writes that He expressed Himself externally as He does internally. The Father communicated all of Himself to the Son, "except for the character of His first-ness."⁵⁴⁹ In imparting the knowledge of His infinite Being to the Son, He simultaneously gave the Second Person of the Trinity an infinite number of ideas for the creation of the world.⁵⁵⁰ Those ideas were like all things that come from the Father; they were perfect and complete expressions of His mind. Because the divine ideas are one with the very essence of God, the Seraphic Doctor states that their instantiation by the Son makes God immediately

⁵⁴⁶ See Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 210, ff. Ratzinger's *The Theology of History* is still the definitive work on this topic.

⁵⁴⁷ Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 49, 59-67.

⁵⁴⁸ Olegario Gonzalez, *Misterio Trinitario y existencia humana: estudio historico teologico en torno a san Buenaventura* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1966), 4-14. Also see Zachary Hayes, introduction to *DQMT*, 13-24.

⁵⁴⁹ Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 59.

⁵⁵⁰ Bonaventure, *Collations*, 11.11.15; idem, *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ (DPKC)*, trans. Zachary Hayes (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 2005), qu. 1, conclusion.

present in creation.⁵⁵¹ Following Dionysius, Bonaventure argues that God literally duplicates or diffuses Himself in the natural order, as He does within the Godhead, such that all beings become a ‘theophany’, or as Augustine put it, a ‘trace’ of the divine.⁵⁵² Despite the pantheistic undertones of this cosmology, the Seraphic Doctor avoids such an extreme by arguing that the Son instantiates only a finite number of the forms He represents and by constantly “insisting on the contingency of the created order as well as on God’s freedom with respect to the created.”⁵⁵³

According to Bonaventure, God’s first creative act took place before the dawn time, when He drew something called prime matter out of nothing.⁵⁵⁴ On Bonaventure’s description, prime matter is the large mass of formless existence through which God finitely redoubles His infinite existence. Since it was formless, prime matter had the latent potential to receive forms. In virtue of its potentiality, it would be the principle of change in creation. When God created the world in time, Bonaventure states that He imposed forms on prime matter. In doing this, He conferred the property of material existence to some of the infinite number of essences or forms that exist immaterially in His mind. Although Bonaventure affirms that there has never been a time when prime matter has not been formed, which is why it cannot be examined in its own right, it nonetheless underlies all that exists. It binds all things together, and it binds them all to God.

By contrast to matter, Bonaventure does not conceive forms as potential but as actualized entities.⁵⁵⁵ In other words, he does not believe forms change. From his ‘essentialist’ metaphysical perspective, forms always are what they are. In virtue of that fact, they are like God, and they positively disclose some finite aspect of His Being. Although he denies the mutability of forms themselves, Bonaventure does not deny that creatures change. To account for the possibility of change, he

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., qu. 2, conclusion.

⁵⁵² See Etienne Gilson, *Augustine*, 210-16; Esther Woo, “Theophanic Cosmic Order in St. Bonaventure,” *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972): 306-30; Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, 180C; Etienne Gilson, *History*, 450; Ilia Delio, “Bonaventure’s Metaphysics of the Good,” *Theological Studies* 60 (1999): 235-37.

⁵⁵³ Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 14; Bonaventure, *Collations*, 11.11.

⁵⁵⁴ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber primus*, 12.2.2.2-3.

⁵⁵⁵ Idem., *Itinerarium*, 1.14.

introduces a doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms.⁵⁵⁶ According to this doctrine, every distinct feature that can be identified in a creature represents a distinct form. Creatures are composites of numerous substantial forms that are joined together without confusion, but without separation, as in a formal distinction (*distinctio rationes*).⁵⁵⁷

Bonaventure's contemporary Aquinas strongly objected to this theory, arguing that a plurality of substantial forms would result in a plurality of creatures.⁵⁵⁸ Aquinas' own opinion was that each creature has but one substantial form, which gives the creature the potential to become a certain kind of being. By participating in behaviours dictated by the form, the creature exists, and as it exists, it actualizes its potential or instantiates its essence.⁵⁵⁹ In this process, the form develops and changes; yet for Aquinas, those changes are accidental. They occur as a result of increasing participation in the single substantial form.

Bonaventure preferred the doctrine of a plurality of substantial forms because he felt that the forms God creates ought to be defined as exact even if limited reflections of the divine form, which is immutable.⁵⁶⁰ After all, what comes from God must be like God. On the assumption that creatures are finitely and materially what God is infinitely and immaterially, Bonaventure denied that the difference between creature and Creator comes down to a difference in the essence-existence relation as it did for Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas.⁵⁶¹ For him, in other words, creatures are not unlike God because they are characterized by a real distinction between essence and existence, where essence and existence in God are one and the same. Instead, they differ because they are comprised of matter and form while God is pure form. For Bonaventure, all creatures are composites of matter and form.

⁵⁵⁶ Idem., *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 1.1.3.1.

⁵⁵⁷ Mechthild Dreyer & Mary Beth Ingham, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 35. According to the authors, Bonaventure's *distinctio rationes* anticipates Henry of Ghent's 'intentional distinction' and Duns Scotus' 'formal distinction'.

⁵⁵⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 11, trans. Timothy Suttor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.76.4.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.77.1.

⁵⁶⁰ Bonaventure, *DQKC*, qu. 4, conclusion.

⁵⁶¹ See Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, trans. Peter King (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008).

Even angels are comprised of ‘spiritual’ matter and form, according to his doctrine of universal hylomorphism.⁵⁶²

Since every creature is a composite of matter and form, it has at least two substantial forms: a ‘form of corporeality’, which causes the creature to be embodied, and the form that is provided by a vegetable, animal, or rational soul. While vegetable and animal souls are inseparable from matter, the rational soul is spiritual. Though it is presently united to matter, it is ultimately separable from matter and capable of union with God (*capax dei*).⁵⁶³ For this reason, Bonaventure writes that the rational soul is united to the body “not as to a perfectible but as to a prison.”⁵⁶⁴ The soul, whether it is vegetable, animal, or rational, is the highest form a creature has. This form predisposes the creature to receive other forms. When a creature changes, it is because it is either gaining or losing a form.

Presupposing that God alone is able to impart the property of existence to an essence, Bonaventure contends that the coming and going of forms in creatures is the result of the direct and ongoing efficient causal action of God. In this way, he exhibits his preference for a *concursus* model of divine causality, according to which the secondary efficient causality of creatures is a shared effort on the part of divine and created beings.⁵⁶⁵ This way of putting things enabled Bonaventure to emphasize the dynamic and ongoing nature of God’s involvement in the created order. It allowed him to stress that every single moment of a creature’s existence is a gift, since “it is only by God’s concurrence that things are sustained in being.”⁵⁶⁶ Because God’s cooperation “derives not from any obligation but from the liberality of the divine bounty,”⁵⁶⁷ Bonaventure insists that creation is radically contingent. All things both depend upon and are indicative of the sustaining love of God.

Borrowing traditional Augustinian terms, Bonaventure refers to the forms or divine ideas as eternal reasons or exemplars.⁵⁶⁸ In what he calls his metaphysics of

⁵⁶² Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 3.1.2.3.

⁵⁶³ Idem., *Itinerarium*, 2.2; *Breviloquium* 2.9.5; *Commentaria, liber primus*, 3.1.1.1.

⁵⁶⁴ Idem., *Commentaria, liber primus*, 1.2.1.2.

⁵⁶⁵ Jacob Schmutz, “Causalité et nature pure,” 230, ff.; John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle*, 96-7.

⁵⁶⁶ Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 70.

⁵⁶⁷ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, 5.1.3.

⁵⁶⁸ Idem., *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 18.2.

“emanation, exemplarity, and consummation,”⁵⁶⁹ the Father stands at the start of a metaphysical circle and emanates His exemplars to the Son. When the Father communicates His exemplars, He communicates in His absolute manner, such that the Son, who is the locus of the divine exemplars, represents all things in the most perfect way.⁵⁷⁰

Although the exemplars in the Son’s mind are one with the essence of God and are thus essentially one, Bonaventure again insists that they are formally separable.⁵⁷¹ That is to say, there are an infinite number of clear and distinct ideas which are present in His intellect. The more traditional view of Aquinas was that there is but one exemplar which is known to God, namely, the exemplar of His simple nature. Insofar as all things are patterned after the exemplar of divine simplicity, God’s universal knowledge of Himself pre-contains particulars. Wanting to reinforce the Franciscan belief that every individual being is perfectly, intimately known to God and perfectly, if finitely, reflects His nature, Bonaventure argued that God possesses an idea of every particular reality, which can be formally distinguished from His ideas of all other particular things.

On those grounds, Bonaventure concludes that there is a reciprocal relationship between created instances of exemplars and the divine exemplars themselves. Creatures resemble ideas as exact copies of them, and the divine ideas resemble creatures in virtue of being their exemplars.⁵⁷² Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas imagined no such reciprocal relationship. For them, creatures resemble a God who does not resemble them. There is but one exemplar with many instantiations, instead of many exemplars that are one in virtue of being contained in one mind.

According to Bonaventure, creatures actually come to exemplify a particular exemplar when the Son chooses to create in the Spirit.⁵⁷³ As He is a theological centre within the Godhead, the one who reconciles the extremes of Father and Spirit, so the Son is the metaphysical centre that unites the Creator to the created. He

⁵⁶⁹ Idem., *Collations*, 2.17.

⁵⁷⁰ Idem., *Commentaria, liber primus*, 6.3.

⁵⁷¹ Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 151; Bonaventure, *DPKC* qu. 3, conclusion.

⁵⁷² Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 150; Bonaventure, *DPKC*, qu. 2, conclusion.

completes the circle of creation by patterning creatures after the exemplars that emanate to Him from the Father, such that they are consummated to their attendant exemplars.⁵⁷⁴ Through Him, the fountain fullness of the Father's love gratuitously overflows into the countless instances of forms that make Him immanently present in creation.

A number of scholars have noted that Bonaventure's account of creation appears to presuppose a univocal concept of being, even though the Seraphic Doctor employs the normal terminology of analogy.⁵⁷⁵ On this concept, two parties enjoy the same mode of being, such that thoughts and words can be applied to them in exactly the same sense. Although Bonaventure admits that it is impossible to breach the gap that separates the finite from the infinite, the material from the immaterial, he affirms that created forms do in fact exist in the same mode as the divine form, namely, in act. For this very reason, they positively reveal God's nature, albeit in a finite respect.⁵⁷⁶ There are several ways Bonaventure describes the univocal relationship between creatures and Creator. In addition to exemplarity, he speaks of creatures as mirrors of the divine nature (*speculum intellectuale*) that give direct insight into some aspect of God's love.⁵⁷⁷ Following the lead of Hugh of St. Victor, he also describes the natural order as a book and creatures as words that testify to His existence.⁵⁷⁸

For the Seraphic Doctor, a creature's univocal relation to God is its mode of participation in Him. Though many have assumed that Bonaventure upholds the ancient metaphysics of participation on the grounds that he invokes it, others have noticed that the Seraphic Doctor recasts the meaning of participation when he

⁵⁷³ Bonaventure, *Collations*, 11.20 & 12.9.14.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.11.

⁵⁷⁵ Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, ch. 7; Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 13-14; Jay Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 203; Philip L. Reynolds, "Bonaventure's Theory of Resemblance," *Traditio* 58 (2003): 221, ff.; Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 15.

⁵⁷⁶ See Leo Sweeney, "Bonaventure and Aquinas on the Divine Being as Infinite," in *Divine Infinity in Greek and Medieval Thought* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 413-38.

⁵⁷⁷ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, 2.11.2.

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.12.5; see also Grover A. Zinn, "Book and Word: The Victorine Background of Bonaventure's Use of Symbols," 143-69.

employs the term, as he does when he discusses analogy.⁵⁷⁹ In his thought, participation is construed as “the reverse of exemplary causality.”⁵⁸⁰ A creature participates in God when it perfectly reflects one of His ideas and positively reveals something of His essence.⁵⁸¹ Here, participation is not an activity, that is, engagement in the mode of existence through which an essence is actualized, but something substantive. For this reason, participation is not something that can be done to greater and lesser degrees. A creature either does or does not participate in full. In advocating this definition of participation, which builds on a univocal concept of being, Bonaventure highlights “the bonds of kinship that connect the creature to the Creator”⁵⁸² and establishes that every creature symbolizes the divine in a unique way.

According to Bonaventure, creatures can symbolize the Creator in one of three levels: as a vestige, an image, or a likeness.⁵⁸³ Every created form is a vestige, no matter whether it has a vegetable, animal, or rational soul, in virtue of the fact that it emanates from the efficient cause, is patterned after an exemplary cause, and is ordained to a final cause.⁵⁸⁴ Put differently, every creature is a vestige because it originates in the Father, is modelled after an idea in the mind of the Son, and reflects that idea in the Spirit. In virtue of the triple causality of the Father, Son, and Spirit, the creature exhibits the qualities of unity, truth, and goodness, which correspond to its measure, number, and weight, respectively. It is in virtue of measure, number, and weight that Bonaventure believes creatures are positive traces of God’s Triune nature, as Augustine had taught.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷⁹ For example, Etienne Gilson in *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*; Anton Pegis in “The Bonaventurian Way to God,” *Mediaeval Studies* 29 (1967): 206-42; and Scott Matthews following him in *Reason Community and Religious Tradition*.

⁵⁸⁰ Leonard Bowman, “The Cosmic Exemplarism of St. Bonaventure,” *The Journal of Religion* 55:2 (1975): 185.

⁵⁸¹ Philip L. Reynolds, “Bonaventure’s Theory of Resemblance,” 252.

⁵⁸² Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 236

⁵⁸³ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, 2.12.1.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.1.4; *Commentaria, liber primus*, 3.1.1.2, ff.

⁵⁸⁵ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, 2.1.1, ff.; see Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 129; Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 228, 392; Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 63.

According to Bonaventure, the label ‘image’ only applies to rational creatures, because they alone are both corporeal and spiritual beings.⁵⁸⁶ Owing to their spiritual nature or *capax dei*, rational beings can do more than merely manifest the goodness of God in the way of a vestige. They can also know that creatures proclaim His goodness. The third level of reflection, that of a likeness, will be discussed in the section on conforming to God’s image.⁵⁸⁷

Although vestiges are ordered towards images and governed by them, Bonaventure does not think this negates the fact that every being is equally close to God, inasmuch as “every single creature from the angel to the grain of sand has its direct model and foundation in the Word Himself in the eternal reasons.”⁵⁸⁸ Although the mode of relation to God may differ, depending on whether a creature is a vestige or an image, the resemblance between creature and divine exemplar is no less exact. When he affirms this, Bonaventure, who had already flattened the levels of participation within classes of beings with his univocal theory of being, tends to further collapse the hierarchy according to which Augustine had ordered the classes of beings themselves. With Francis, Bonaventure regards even the lowliest of creatures as brothers and sisters of equal stature.⁵⁸⁹

Despite the differences between Bonaventure’s essentialism and Augustine’s participatory mindset, the Seraphic Doctor insists that he learned his metaphysics of exemplarity from Augustine, and scholars have taken his testimony as a sign of his unwavering intellectual fidelity to Augustine on metaphysical matters.⁵⁹⁰ Gilson, for instance, contends that Bonaventure’s essentialist metaphysics and the various doctrines it entails, such as the plurality of substantial forms, universal hylomorphism, and the conflation of existence and essence in creatures, precisely

⁵⁸⁶ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 1.2.1.2.

⁵⁸⁷ Idem., *Breviloquium*, 2.12.1.

⁵⁸⁸ Leonard Bowman, “Cosmic Exemplarism,” 187.

⁵⁸⁹ Francis of Assisi, “The Canticle of Brother Sun,” in *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, 37-9.

⁵⁹⁰ Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 44; Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 61; J. Guy Bougerol, *Introduction*, 32-3; Effrem Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 48, 60, 73, 76; Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 57; Ilia Delio, “Bonaventure’s Metaphysics of the Good,” 231; Jose de Vinck, “Two Aspects of the *Rationes Seminales* in the Writings of Bonaventure,” in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274-1974*, vol. 3, 307-16.

formulate Augustinian views.⁵⁹¹ Recent researchers have shown, however, that interpreting Augustine in an essentialist manner was one of the greatest of Gilson's rare mistakes.⁵⁹²

The points of dissimilarity that I have mentioned here serve to suggest that Bonaventure is not genuinely Augustinian (nor by implication Platonic) when it comes to metaphysical matters. Though he employed the Augustinian language of exemplarity, eternal reasons, measure, number, and weight, and so on, he used the terms to introduce positions that actually preclude truly Augustinian ones, positions that originally entered the Latin tradition through Avicenna's interpretation of Plato and Aristotle. The irony of the situation is that scholastic methodology made it possible for Bonaventure to supplant Augustine's views on the authority of Augustine himself.

THE HUMAN BEING

Human beings differ from all other beings on Bonaventure's account because they are comprised of both a body and a rational soul.⁵⁹³ Since they possess these two natures, humans have something in common with creatures as well as with the divine. They are positioned midway between the two extremes and are therefore capable of reconciling them.⁵⁹⁴ The whole human task, as the Seraphic Doctor explains it, is to cognitively refer creatures to their corresponding exemplars in the divine mind. Since vestiges are unable to close the circle of their creation of their own accord and are therefore inept to achieve the union with God which is the purpose of all beings, they depend upon human beings to humbly serve them by

⁵⁹¹ Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 131; idem, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 82: creatures copies of divine ideas; 199: essentialism; 207: the immutability of the eternal reasons.

⁵⁹² John Rist argues this in "Augustine, Aristotelianism, and Aquinas" in *Aquinas the Augustinian* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 83-8. Luigi Gioia also challenges Gilson's essentialist reading of Augustine's ontology and advocates a participatory reading in *Theological Epistemology*, 260-9. On Rist's account, Aquinas took advantage of the philosophical resources of Aristotle to give a more technical explanation of the relationship between essence and existence as Augustine had understood it.

⁵⁹³ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, 2.10.3.

⁵⁹⁴ Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 94; Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber tertius*, 2.1.1.2; idem., *Breviloquium* 2.4.3, 2.9.4, 2.10.3-4, 2.12.4, 6.

working on their behalf in this regard.⁵⁹⁵ When human beings consummate creatures and their exemplars, they fulfil their own purpose and image the work of the Son, who makes the opposites of Father and Spirit, Creator and created coincide by fully representing the one to the other, that is, by standing at the centre of creation.

According to Bonaventure, human beings have the capacity to reconcile creatures and the Creator because they have cognitive faculties associated with their two different natures.⁵⁹⁶ Five external senses (sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing) and five internal senses equip them to apprehend embodied beings.⁵⁹⁷ The rational soul itself allows them to form abstract concepts. Bonaventure states that there are two faces to the rational soul, which he describes in terms of Augustine's higher and lower reason.⁵⁹⁸ Higher reason is designed for the contemplation of God and is responsible for abstraction.⁵⁹⁹ Lower reason makes use of the concepts higher reason abstracts in order to assess reality.⁶⁰⁰ In what follows, I will explain how Bonaventure envisions the operation of these faculties.

Although Bonaventure never mentions Avicenna, his account of the faculties bears striking resemblance to that of Avicenna, even if this is rarely recognized. There are a number of reasons why Bonaventure may have chosen not to acknowledge his debt to Avicenna. One reason is likely that Avicenna's doctrine of the separate Active Intellect had recently fallen into disrepute. It was probably the case that Bonaventure was trying to dissociate himself from any philosophical doctrine that was being challenged by his contemporaries.

Another reason for the silence on Avicenna is that scholarly interests had turned away from Avicenna towards Averroes and Aristotle himself by Bonaventure's time. The popular practice was now to cite Aristotle rather than Avicenna, even when Avicenna's views were being espoused and attributed to Aristotle. Finally, acknowledging Avicenna may not have been necessary for Bonaventure, inasmuch as the work of transforming the Arab's thought into a

⁵⁹⁵ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 1.2.1.2; *Collationes*, 18.9.

⁵⁹⁶ Idem., *Breviloquium*, 2.11.1.

⁵⁹⁷ Idem., *Itinerarium*, 2.3.

⁵⁹⁸ Idem., *Breviloquium* 2.9.7; *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 24.1.2.2.

⁵⁹⁹ Idem., *DQKC*, qu. 4, conclusion.

⁶⁰⁰ Idem., *Commentaria, liber primus*, 3.2.1.2.

distinctly Franciscan tradition of thought had already been done by the first generation of Franciscan scholars. By the time of Bonaventure, the Avicennian structures of Franciscan thought were already in place and could simply be presupposed.

Despite the lack of explicit references, the contours of Avicenna's thought are clearly identifiable in Bonaventure's account of the five internal senses. The first of the internal senses on his list is the common sense, which initially grasps the objects the external senses perceive. The apprehensive faculty retains the likenesses of the objects the common sense obtains.⁶⁰¹ The next phase in internal sensation is 'pleasure'. Here, the human being distinguishes the various features of an object, such as its sweetness, beauty, symmetry, or colour.⁶⁰² After pleasure comes judgment. In judging, the rational being determines "not only whether something is white or black...not only whether it is wholesome or harmful...but also why it is pleasurable."⁶⁰³

Judgment is the first step in the process of abstraction, for it is in judgment that reason dissociates the sensible form from the place, time, and circumstances under which it was originally encountered and lays bare what it really is, albeit as a particular.⁶⁰⁴ The judging faculty produces what Avicenna had called an intention, and what Bonaventure refers to as a 'created reason' or exact likeness of the sensible form, which is impressed on the memory.⁶⁰⁵

On Bonaventure's account, created reasons are the proper objects of science.⁶⁰⁶ Although the formation of a created reason represents a crucial step in the process of abstraction, it is not yet abstraction. Bonaventure does not even think the 'animal' faculties are suited to accomplish the act of abstraction. Nor does he think that the intellect, which is equipped to abstract, requires any help from the animal faculties once it has obtained the created reason from the memory.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰¹ Idem., *Itinerarium*, 2.4.

⁶⁰² Ibid., 2.5.

⁶⁰³ Ibid., 2.6.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 2.9.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 2.7.

⁶⁰⁶ Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 158.

⁶⁰⁷ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 17.24.

According to Bonaventure, these views are consistent with Augustine's 'active' theory of sensation, according to which the rational soul does not passively receive sense data, but merely uses the body to acquire the information it requires to complete its operations.⁶⁰⁸ On the assumption that Augustine entertains such a view, Bonaventure concludes that the bishop is also a dualist who holds that the rational soul is unaffected by the body and operates independently of it.⁶⁰⁹

While Augustine admittedly argued that the intellect performs its operations independently, he did not by that same token suggest that cognition is in no sense passive or that the faculties of sensation and imagination are altogether cut off from the intellect. To the contrary, he acknowledged that what comes to lower reason from the external environment is in many respects beyond its control. While the work of higher reason is indeed active, it nonetheless depends upon what is passively received by lower reason. Lower reason, moreover, is not a subset of higher reason for Augustine, as Bonaventure construes it. Rather, it simply *is* the faculties that operate on sense objects, which Bonaventure attempted to detach from the intellect.

Far from dichotomizing body and soul, Augustine seems to believe that the form of the rational soul *entails* embodiment.⁶¹⁰ Although he accepts that the corporeal body will one day be discarded, he does not suggest in the same instance that the work of the external and internal senses is of no eternal significance. To the contrary, he claims that there is continuity between corporeal and incorporeal embodied life, inasmuch as the faculties of sensation and imagination which are ordered to operate on physical bodies will one day be replaced by comparable faculties suited to operate with respect to spiritual ones.

When he turns to explain the abstractive work of higher reason, Bonaventure introduces Augustine's psychological analogy of memory, understanding, and will. On his account, the memory preserves the created reasons the judging faculty has produced. Yet it also retains a number of eternal reasons that the Son has innately impressed upon the mind, namely, the concept of Being and its trinity of

⁶⁰⁸ Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 353; idem, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 56-65.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 44-5

⁶¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 11, 1.76.1.

transcendental properties, one, true, and good, which constitute the image of God.⁶¹¹ Since the reasons are one with the very essence of God, they give the mind an immediate connection to God, such that He rather than His handiwork is the first thing the intellect knows.

Because what is impressed is only the image of God, Bonaventure insists that the reasons do not reveal God Himself.⁶¹² Even though they are not the direct objects of knowledge, Bonaventure describes the reasons as the ‘moving causes’ of knowledge. Where the *will* is oriented towards God, the reasons retained in the *memory* regulate efforts to acquire abstract *understanding* of a created reason. That is to say, they enable the intellect to strip a created reason of all additional attachments and see what its essence really is, which is to see how it corresponds with an eternal reason in the mind of the Son.⁶¹³ When Augustine said that all things must be known in eternal reasons that are above the mind, through the cooperation of memory, understanding, and will, Bonaventure claims, this is exactly what he had in mind.⁶¹⁴ On this count, scholars have taken the Seraphic Doctor at his word.⁶¹⁵

Although Bonaventure affirms that each person possesses an individual intellect and denies that God performs acts of abstraction on behalf of the mind, along the lines of the doctrine of the separate Active Intellect, he nonetheless maintains that the Son exerts a direct influence on the human agent intellect.⁶¹⁶ Christ oversees human cognition through the eternal reasons He implants, which supervise and sustain the work of human reason.⁶¹⁷ On account of the presence of the eternal reasons, the active work of the intellect is not wholly active, but is a

⁶¹¹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, 3.3.

⁶¹² Idem., *Commentaria, liber primus*, 3.1.1.2; idem., *Christus unus omnium Magister, Christus unus omnium Magister*, in *Opera omnia S. Bonaventurae*, vol. 5 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1891), 18.

⁶¹³ Idem., *DQKC*, qu. 4, conclusion; *Commentaria, liber primus*, 3.1.1.1 & *liber secundus* 16.2.3; *Collations*, 5.5.1.

⁶¹⁴ Idem., *DQKC*, qu. 4, conclusion.

⁶¹⁵ Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 395, 491; Effrem Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 92; Ilia Delio, *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1999), 47 & *Simply Bonaventure*, 71, 103.

⁶¹⁶ Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 88.

⁶¹⁷ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 24.1.2.4.

cooperative effort on the part of the human person and the inner teacher, Christ.⁶¹⁸ Human beings, like Christ Himself, play a role that is part active and part passive.

Without the supernatural support they passively receive from Christ, Bonaventure asserts, human beings would be unable to perform their natural cognitive operations and thus know reality. On his account, the stipulations for true and certain knowledge are immutability on the part of the object known and infallibility on the part of the knower.⁶¹⁹ Because the eternal reasons in the mind of the Son render knowable forms immutable, the meaning of all things can only be found in Him. Consequently, the human mind that seeks “infallible, indubitable, irrefutable, indisputable”⁶²⁰ understanding of reality must have access to the same unchanging rules that stabilize and lend meaning to it.⁶²¹ Unless the Son who sustains all things in being also sustains the work of the mind, there is no way the mind can identify the principles through which God has ordered reality in order to truly and certainly know it.⁶²²

The received view amongst Medievalists that Bonaventure’s insistence on this divine concurrence in human knowledge is consistent with Augustine’s ‘pessimistic’ claim that human reason can do nothing without divine help and needs grace to sustain nature.⁶²³ Yet there is a subtle difference between the views of Bonaventure and Augustine on the relation between grace and nature. The *influentia* model of divine causality compelled Augustine to define the gift of the natural cognitive ability and the freedom to use it *as* grace.

Bonaventure’s *concursus* model, by contrast, led him to posit with characteristically Franciscan self-deprecation that nature amounts to nothing without grace. From his perspective, nature is not truly or at least totally the gift of God, because it is virtually useless until grace is super-added to it. The real gift of God is the extrinsic grace which renders a useless nature useful. Although this certainly is a

⁶¹⁸ Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 84, 92.

⁶¹⁹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, 3.2; see also *DQKC*, qu. 4, conclusion.

⁶²⁰ Idem., *Itinerarium*, 2.9; *Collations*, 2.2.9-10.

⁶²¹ Ibid., 3.2; *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 6.3 & 28.1.1; *Christus unus omnium Magister*, 6.

⁶²² Ibid., 18; *Collations*, 1.13; *Itinerarium*, 5.7.

pessimistic view of human reason, which is consistent Francis' emphasis on the mind's absolute dependence on God, Augustine's was not 'pessimistic' in the same sense. The bishop only worried about the competence of human reason to the extent that the mind refused to prioritize God and thus relinquished the objectivity of its perspective.

With the direct involvement of Christ and only under those conditions, Bonaventure believes human reason is adequate to perform its natural abstractive function and thus to achieve what he calls the 'full analysis'⁶²⁴ (*plena resolutio*) of forms. The full analysis on his description is the knowledge of a form in relation to its divine exemplar which is made possible by the intuited reasons through which the intellect strips superfluous determinants away from a created reason. To Bonaventure's mind, it is possible to fully analyze a form on the basis of a single instance of it, on account of the fact that forms are fixed and are instantiated as such, and because the powers of the mind, like the forms it knows, are always fully actualized.⁶²⁵

Another term Bonaventure uses to refer to full analysis is *contuitio*.⁶²⁶ Again, *contuitio* is defined as the co-recognition or co-knowledge of a created form together with its correlative idea in the mind of God, and it is enabled by the intuition of the transcendentals.⁶²⁷ In *contuitio*, the knowledge of creature and Creator, natural and supernatural, is coextensive, as it was for Francis.

In offering his definition of abstraction in terms of 'full analysis' or 'contuitio', Bonaventure reveals his preference for an Avicennian understanding of abstraction, although scholars tend to assume his account is Aristotelian simply

⁶²³ Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 48, 110 & Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 388. See Augustine, *The Spirit and the Letter* (Whitefish: Kessinger, 2005), 52.30; 53.31 & 54 on 'apart from Me you can do nothing' and 'what have you that you have not received'?

⁶²⁴ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, 3.4.

⁶²⁵ This is the implication of Bonaventure's claim that the soul is united with its powers (see *Commentaria, liber primus*, 3.2.1.1-3). That claim amounts to arguing that essence equals existence in human beings, or that the human cognitive power is always fully actualized. Gilson attributes this view to *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 219.

⁶²⁶ See J.M. Bissen, "De la contuitio," *Etudes Franciscaines* 46 (1934): 559-69.

⁶²⁷ Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 151; Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber primus*, 45.2.1.

because he attributes it to Aristotle.⁶²⁸ For Aristotle, not unlike Augustine, abstraction is the act of relating and uniting diverse images to produce a concept, which can help in the comprehension of new experiences, which in turn affect the expansion and revision of the original concept.⁶²⁹ The power to engage in this unifying mode of cognition is the power to cognize in the way characteristic of the divine. It is a potential power that is actualized through participation in a unifying mode of cognition. Through participation, the human being increasingly participates subjectively in an objective cognitive order, which is God's knowledge of Himself.

For Bonaventure, abstraction is not a matter of engaging in the cognitive activity described above so much as it is the act of gripping the abstract concept itself, as it subsists in the mind of God. This is not an originally Aristotelian but Avicennian understanding of abstraction. In performing the act of abstraction, the Seraphic Doctor states that mere science is transformed into wisdom. Although he acknowledges that Plato paved the way of wisdom, which proceeds according to eternal reasons or exemplars, he states that the philosopher nonetheless destroyed the way of science, which proceeds according to created reasons, inasmuch as he denied the importance of empirical knowledge.

The way of science was exactly the one that Aristotle enabled his readers to take, though he denied the reality of eternal reasons in doing so.⁶³⁰ Augustine was the master of both science and wisdom, in Bonaventure's opinion, because he not only acknowledged that knowledge arises from the senses and that the created reason is indispensable to human knowing, but also recognized that the created reason cannot achieve complete accuracy and certitude until it is informed by an eternal one.⁶³¹ The bishop saw the importance of science, but he also recognized that there

⁶²⁸ With exceptional clarity, David Burrell explains how Duns Scotus and Aquinas appropriated the Avicennian and the Aristotelian theories of abstraction, respectively, and he discusses the differences between those two theories in his article on, "Creation, Will, and Knowledge in Aquinas and Duns Scotus," in *Faith and Freedom*.

⁶²⁹ Montague Brown argues that there is 'essential agreement' between the Aristotelian theory of abstraction and the Augustinian account of illumination in, "Aristotle and Augustine on the Way to Truth: Essential Agreement and Existential Difference," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 67 (1993): 253-67.

⁶³⁰ Bonaventure, *Christus unus omnium Magister*, 18.

⁶³¹ Gregory LaNave, *Through Holiness to Wisdom: The Nature of Theology according to Bonaventure* (Rome: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 2005), 148.

could be no science outside the wisdom of God.⁶³² Bonaventure thus praises Augustine for his ability to bring together the best insights of Plato and Aristotle, as they had originally been interpreted by Avicenna.

In Bonaventure's thought as in Avicenna's, the human ability to abstract or *contuit* is always the by-product of intuition, or the primary knowledge of Being and the transcendentals.⁶³³ On the basis of the belief that Being is the first thing the mind knows, Bonaventure argues in his disputed questions on the Trinity that it is possible to establish the self-evidence or indubitableness of God's existence in three ways that correspond to the threefold existence of all things, namely, in the mind, in creation, and in God, or through that which is interior, exterior, and superior to the mind. Scholars generally agree that the Seraphic Doctor learned these three ways from Augustine and Anselm, in whose tradition of thought it was always "maintained that in some way the existence of God is self-evident,"⁶³⁴ by contrast to the tradition of Thomas Aquinas.⁶³⁵

The first way proves God's existence from what is most accessible to a person, namely, the intuitive knowledge of Being and its properties. Since this knowledge represents the very image of God, Bonaventure affirms that the existence of God is bound to be self-evident to the rational being that reflects upon itself as an image. The Seraphic Doctor bolsters this contention with help from Augustine, who taught that it is only by attending to the interior life, or the image of God within, that one can come to know God.⁶³⁶

As in the thought of Avicenna, the first *a priori* or ontological approach to proving God's existence opens up the second way of doing so cosmologically.

⁶³² Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 27-37.

⁶³³ Ilia Delio, *Crucified Love*, 80.

⁶³⁴ Zachary Hayes, introduction to *DQMT*, 69; Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 121; idem, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 41-2; Thomas R. Mathias, "Bonaventurian Ways to God through Reason," *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976): 192-232; "Bonaventurian Ways to God through Reason" (continued), *Franciscan Studies* 37 (1977): 153-206; R.E. Houser, "Bonaventure's Three-Fold Way to God," in *Medieval Masters*, 91-145; Anton Pegis, "The Bonaventurian Way to God," Scott Matthews *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition*, ch. 4; Effrem Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 37, ff; J. Guy Bougerol, *Introduction*, 35-6; Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 120; Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 114.

⁶³⁵ Gilson differentiates between Augustinian and Thomist proofs in *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 21.

⁶³⁶ Bonaventure, *DQMT*, qu. 1.1, arguments in agreement 9.

According to the Seraphic Doctor, God can be known as soon as a creature is known inasmuch as the intuitive knowledge of any being presupposes the intuitive knowledge of the Being that is the source of all beings. Because the existence of an infinite Being satisfies the condition of possibility for the existence of the finite beings that are encountered, Bonaventure concludes that all beings bear incontestable witness to the existence of the divine Being.⁶³⁷ To support this contention, he recalls Augustine's claim that 'this and that truth' must be seen in the first Truth.⁶³⁸

In the third way, God's existence is shown to be self-evident through an analysis of the very definition of God. Bonaventure defines God as the Supreme Being, or that than which nothing greater can be thought. Since this supremely existing Being exists in the mind by intuition, and it is greater to exist in reality as well as in the mind, the Seraphic Doctor concludes that God supremely exists in reality. He validates this argument by citing the *Proslogion* of Anselm.⁶³⁹ The common scholarly assumption is that Bonaventure's advocacy of the argument that "the existence of God considered in itself is absolutely evident" proves that "he remained the faithful disciple of Anselm."⁶⁴⁰

Although Bonaventure establishes the self-evidence of God's existence in these three ways, it is important to note that all the ways unfold from the first way, or from the intuitive knowledge of Being. Owing to that intuition, the intellect can turn within itself, outside itself, or above itself and know that God exists with absolute certitude, since the Being manifested in all three instances is the same one, which is God. In summary, the interior awareness of the cognitive resources one possesses in the knowledge of Being, which confirms the status of the human being as the *imago dei*, is subjective foundation for all further knowledge of realities outside the self.

Bonaventure's understanding of interiority is often mentioned as one of the chief signs of his indebtedness to Augustine.⁶⁴¹ While it is true that Augustine urges

⁶³⁷ Ibid., conclusion.

⁶³⁸ Augustine, *Soliloquia*, 1.8.15; Bonaventure, *DQMT*, qu. 1.1, arguments in agreement 25.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., arguments in agreement 21-24.

⁶⁴⁰ Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 126, ff.

⁶⁴¹ Effrem Bettoni, *Bonaventure* 84, 125; Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 45 & "St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, and the Movement of Thought in the Thirteenth Century," in *Bonaventure and Aquinas: Enduring Philosophers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 6-15; F.C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy*, 170; Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 218;

his readers to look inward and reflect upon the fact that they are made in the image of God, self-reflection has a different outcome in his thought than it does in that of Bonaventure. When Augustine encouraged inwardness, he prompted his readers to maintain a negative attitude towards the objects of knowledge, or to view them as means to the knowledge of the Good rather than as ultimate goods.

For Bonaventure, by contrast, reflection upon the self as an image means coming to the realization that the mind has certain innate powers that render the subject the adequate foundation for the acquisition of positive or immediate knowledge of creatures and even God.⁶⁴² This is the sort of proto-Cartesian turn to the subject that contemporary scholars consider problematic. While it is not the notion of interiority Augustine entertained, it is indeed the idea of the interior life that can be traced to the thought of Bonaventure's *Franciscan Augustine*.

In the thought of this Franciscan Augustine, a theory of knowledge by direct representation supplants a theory of knowledge by participation, a *concursum* model of divine causality replaces the *influentia* account, and as these and other substitutions are made, an emphasis on the all-sufficiency of the knower—whose sufficiency comes from God—and an interest in the infallible truth and certitude of knowledge that is foreign to the thought of Augustine comes to feature on the philosophical scene. All these changes were brought about by Bonaventure in his effort to formulate a theory of knowledge that translated Francis of Assisi's experience of the natural and the supernatural into philosophical categories, and to make these innovative moves on the authority of traditional thinkers, above all, Augustine and Anselm.

Fall

Unlike Augustine and Anselm, Bonaventure does not believe that the fall effaced the image of God on the intellect. He does not hold that it undermined the *a priori* awareness of the transcendentals, which constitutes the human power to know. After the fall, he affirms, the cognitive powers remained fully activated as ever.

⁶⁴² Gilson attributes a view of knowledge as 'immediate' to Augustine in *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 80.

God's existence, consequently, was still self-evident to the intellect, through creatures, and in itself.⁶⁴³ From Bonaventure's perspective, the claim that the fall did in fact ruin the *imago dei* implies that there is some defect in God, since the image of God is immediately joined to God and the *capax dei*, in a sense, *is* God. That claim suggests that God Himself is somehow responsible for the fact that human persons fail to see Him in themselves, in creatures, and in Himself. But this is manifestly not the case. There is no defect in the divine being, and He is not responsible for human failures. Echoing Anselm's words in the third chapter of his *Proslogion*, Bonaventure writes that God exists so supremely that He cannot be thought not to exist.⁶⁴⁴

Since the fall was not caused by a defective intellect, the Seraphic Doctor concludes that it must have been brought about by an impaired will.⁶⁴⁵ While the work of the intellect is always a collaborative effort on the part of God and human beings, the will and the will alone belongs wholly to the knower. For this reason, God cannot be implicated in the fall of the will. Such a fall, on Bonaventure's explanation, entails a refusal to act as though God is the efficient, exemplary, and final cause of the mind's work. Instead of this, the will compels the intellect to behave as if it is the source of its own potency, to live according to its own norms, and for its own ends.⁶⁴⁶ In short, the fall of the will inverts the proper order of things. Rather than conforming ideas of things to the divine rules, human beings reduce the principles of knowledge to their own ideas. Putting the point in Augustine's words, Bonaventure writes that they prefer temporal goods to the eternal Good. They are overcome with pride.⁶⁴⁷

Although the 'disorientation' of the will does not abolish the intellect's ability to intuit, Bonaventure affirms that it renders the intellect ignorant of its ability.⁶⁴⁸ According to Bonaventure, Anselm had said as much when he criticized the 'fool'

⁶⁴³ Bonaventure, *DQMT*, qu. 1.1, conclusion.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., reply to objections 4.

⁶⁴⁵ Idem., *Breviloquium*, 3.1.1; *DQMT*, qu. 1.1, reply to objections 1-3.

⁶⁴⁶ Idem., *Breviloquium*, 3.1.3.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.12.4 & 4.4.2; *Collations*, 2.20.5; *Itinerarium*, 1.7.

⁶⁴⁸ Idem., *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 22.2.1.

for failing to acknowledge the manifestly obvious existence of God.⁶⁴⁹ Because the fool's access to the *a priori* transcendentals that are impressed upon higher reason is restricted, lower reason fails to recognize the unmistakable fact that creatures bear witness to God's existence and forms concepts about reality that fall short of absolute truth and certitude.⁶⁵⁰

In Bonaventure's account of the fall, the theological difference between him and Augustine becomes especially pronounced. The main source of the difference lies in a difference of opinion concerning the nature of the intellect's first object. While Augustine seems to admit that God was the first thing the mind knew in the original order of creation, he certainly does not think this remained the case after the fall. At that time, creatures became the first things the intellect took into consideration. Only in faith does Augustine think God is restored to His rightful place as the concept that governs the intellect's operations. Even then, however, Augustine insists that the knower must re-learn how to evaluate creatures in the light of the knowledge of God until the habit of doing so constantly is re-formed.

Although Augustine never would have denied that, objectively speaking, God exists and all things testify to His existence, he believed the problem was precisely that, subjectively speaking, human beings lost the ability to discern the evidence for the existence of God. In contrast, Bonaventure affirms that the subjective awareness of God never ceases. The power to know Him is not a potential that waits to be actualized through the process of re-conforming to His image. It is an actualized ability that is fully switched either on or off depending on the direction of the will.⁶⁵¹ On this assumption, Bonaventure concludes that the world is populated by two classes of people, those like Francis that live in a state of primeval innocence and those that have been wholly overcome by sin and should not therefore be trusted by the person of faith.⁶⁵²

⁶⁴⁹ Idem., *Breviloquium*, 3.11.3; *Commentaria, liber primus*, 8.1.2.1.

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid., *liber secundus*, 24.2.1.1; see John F. Quinn, "Certitude of Reason and Faith in St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas," in *Saint Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 105-40.

⁶⁵¹ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, 5.3.5.

⁶⁵² Ibid., 4.1.2.

Redemption

Because Bonaventure does not think the *imago dei* was ever effaced, he does not believe the Son of God became incarnate so that human beings could learn to gradually recover the intellectual capacity they relinquished at the fall. In point of fact, he envisions the nature of Christ's redemptive work in a way that totally differs from the way of Augustine and Anselm. For Bonaventure, Christ mainly came to complete His creative work. Only incidentally did He make atonement for sins.⁶⁵³

Wherever he unfurls his doctrine of redemption, Bonaventure explains why the Son needed to come for the completion of creation. In His initial act of creation, the Seraphic Doctor recalls, the Son objectified the ideas He received from the Father in the natural order, causing the Father's totally gratuitous love to overflow into reality, making it immediately present in created beings.⁶⁵⁴ In doing this, the Son destined all creatures for union with the Father, from whom they originally emanated.

According to Bonaventure, the destiny of all beings cannot be fully realized short of the Incarnation of the Son because the status of creatures as immediate communicators of God's nature cannot be activated until the one who perfectly represents the whole world in Himself and makes God immediately present in it becomes immediately present in the world Himself. This is exactly what the Incarnate Son of God did. The 'metaphysical' centre of creation, who is positioned midway between Creator and creation, actually assumed His position there. When He returned to the Father after His crucifixion, He completed the circle of the creative act He began when He instantiated the ideas He learned from the Father.⁶⁵⁵ He joined the last to the first, reconciling the opposite extremes.⁶⁵⁶

As He had created human beings for union with God, Bonaventure affirms that the Son saw fit to come in the form of a man as opposed to any other being. When He held the extremes of human and divine nature together in His Incarnate

⁶⁵³ Zachary Hayes, "Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of St. Bonaventure," in *Studies Honoring Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1976), 309-29.

⁶⁵⁴ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber primus*, 37.1.3.1-2.

⁶⁵⁵ Jay Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 212.

Person, “touching God with one hand and humanity with the other,”⁶⁵⁷ He brought the creation of human beings full circle. In realizing the human capacity for union with God, He made it possible for the rest of the created order to be brought to completion through the service of human beings. That is to say, He allowed human persons to occupy their own “middle place and to unite the extremes of material and spiritual reality,”⁶⁵⁸ to represent things in their own minds as those things are represented in the mind of the Son. In short, the Second Person of the Trinity made human beings microcosms of His macrocosmic order. In this, He realized through human persons the pre-disposition in matter for union with God.⁶⁵⁹ As Bonaventure concludes, the Incarnation makes for the perfection of the human and consequently for the perfection of the entire universe.⁶⁶⁰

To Bonaventure’s mind, the most significant events in the earthly life of the Son were those that surrounded His crucifixion.⁶⁶¹ Although the Seraphic Doctor acknowledges that the cross was an achievement of the whole Trinity, he reiterates that the Trinity is summarized and focused in the Son.⁶⁶² Inasmuch as the creative work of the Second Person is a sign of the totally voluntary, self-abandoning nature of God’s love, Bonaventure argues that its completion had to be accomplished at the moment in Christ’s life when He made the sacrificial nature of that love most evident, namely, at the moment of his death on the cross.⁶⁶³ Hanging there, Christ conveyed the nature of God most clearly even as He modelled most effectively how He intended human beings to behave in His order. He showed that they were to live as poor and humble servants of the most poor and humble beings.

An incidental consequence of Christ’s voluntary abandonment of His will was the correction of the self-centred tendencies of the fallen human will, or the

⁶⁵⁶ Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 74-5; Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber tertius*, 1.2.1; *Breviloquium*, 4.1.2

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 18.

⁶⁵⁹ Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order*, 76.

⁶⁶⁰ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber tertius*, 1.2.2.

⁶⁶¹ Idem., *Breviloquium*, 4.9.2.

⁶⁶² Ibid., 4.2.2.

⁶⁶³ Elizabeth Dreyer, “A Condescending God: Bonaventure’s Theology of the Cross,” in *Cross in the Christian Tradition* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2000), 192-210.

forgiveness of sins.⁶⁶⁴ According to Bonaventure, the decision to love Christ equates with a decision to abandon the will to Him. Furthermore, it is a decision that reactivates the awareness of the *a priori* power of knowing, or the image of God, and thus restores access to the divine rules that are stamped there, through which reality is truly and certainly grasped.

While the rules of judgment were reduced to human whims under the guidance of the fallen will, the reordering of the will reinstates the proper 'hierarchical' order of things in the intellect. Bonaventure refers to Christ as the true Hierarchy, because He orders the lower in accordance with the higher, in and outside the Trinity.⁶⁶⁵ Through His influence, which comes by way of the *a priori* transcendentals, the human intellect is re-awakened to the *imago dei* or 'hierarchized', as Bonaventure calls it, borrowing a term from Pseudo-Dionysius. As a result of its 'hierarchization', the mind reverts to the primal order that was overturned at the fall.⁶⁶⁶ Through the experience of hierarchization within, the intellect reacquires the ability to preserve the hierarchical order in the external world, that is, to conduit creatures with their divine exemplars. Hierarchization thus re-situates human persons at the centre of creation, setting them and all things on a trajectory for union with God.

Conforming to God's Image

By the time Bonaventure had served two years as Minister General, he had become well aware of the problems he faced as leader of the Franciscan order. He had dealt firsthand with the complaints of the spirituals and had witnessed the extent to which the charges of the university academics were undermining the intellectual legitimacy of the friars minor. With these problems weighing on his mind, the Seraphic Doctor retreated to Mt. Alverna in 1259 to pray for guidance. While there, Bonaventure writes that he reflected upon the three ways the mind ascends to God.⁶⁶⁷ In a flash of insight, he says he suddenly realized that the vision of the six-winged

⁶⁶⁴ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber tertius*, 1.2.2.

⁶⁶⁵ Idem., *Collations*, 3.12-21; *Breviloquium*, 5.5.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., *Breviloquium*, 5.4.4; *Collations* 21.17; *Itinerarium*; 4.4; Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, 164D, 165 A.

⁶⁶⁷ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, prologue 2.

seraph Francis had on that very mountain illustrated the route by which his rapture could be reached.

Before Bonaventure and even Francis, both Dionysius and Richard had used the seraph to symbolize the mind's transcendence of the realm of knowledge and attainment of the Love of God.⁶⁶⁸ Dionysius describes the seraphim as the 'fiery' angels that are closest to God and that are capable of approaching Him without intermediaries.⁶⁶⁹ They emanate the intense and purifying heat of love, which lifts them up to the direct vision of Love. According to Dionysius and Richard, the seraphim are the agents through which human beings are purified and elevated to the same vision.

Uniquely, the fiery seraph that was seen by Francis appeared in cruciform. To Bonaventure's mind, Francis' vision reinforced the fact that the crucified Christ is the fullest expression of divine love and that sacrificial love for Him is needed to gain access to the three ways of knowing Him, which are represented by the three pairs of wings. The first pair of wings that covers the seraph's feet symbolizes the knowledge of God that comes through contact with the exterior world; the second pair, crossed over the body of the seraph, symbolizes interior knowledge; the last pair extends upwards, gesturing towards the knowledge of what is superior, and thus towards God Himself.

When Bonaventure caught his own glimpse of Francis' seraphic vision, he immediately realized that it was the key to solving the problems that plagued his order. When he descended from Alverna, he composed his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* with the discoveries he had made on that mountain in mind. The *Itinerarium* is often described as the last and even the greatest attempt to give a traditional Augustinian explanation of the 'ascent' into God that is brought about by engagement in three modes of knowing.⁶⁷⁰ In my words, it is seen as the final

⁶⁶⁸ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 205A-305C, & Richard of St. Victor, *The Mystical Ark*, trans. Grover A. Zinn (Mahwah: Paulist, 1979).

⁶⁶⁹ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, 200D-208C; 300B-305C.

⁶⁷⁰ Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 76; Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 73; Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 87; Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 441; Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God*, 102.

Medieval statement of the process involved in conforming to the image of God that had been outlined in works like Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Anselm's *Proslogion*.

Although Bonaventure refers to three types of knowledge, he does not seem to simply rehearse the traditional account of what it means to conform to the image of God. Admittedly, he articulates his account in a standard format, at least in some respects, and invokes the authority of Augustine, Anselm, and Dionysius in doing so. Yet my contention is that Bonaventure gives expression by these means to an idea of Christ likeness that is unprecedented, inasmuch as it follows from the innovative and decidedly Franciscan concept of God and His image he had elaborated elsewhere. On my argument, it cannot be the case that Bonaventure attempts to offer resources for conforming to God's image like the ones Augustine and Anselm had previously provided, because he does not hold that the image was damaged at the fall, much less that re-conforming to it is necessary.

In the case of Christ likeness as in others, I maintain that Bonaventure introduces new ideas under the auspices of the Augustinian tradition. For this reason, I do not classify his *Itinerarium* in the category of Augustinian theological-pedagogical works. Rather, I regard it as the *locus classicus* on Christ likeness, as it was conceived in the recently founded Franciscan intellectual tradition. In what follows, I offer an interpretive exposition of the seven chapters of the *Itinerarium*, where Bonaventure gives his account of Christ likeness under the Dionysian rubric of purgation, illumination, and union.⁶⁷¹ Subsequently, I analyze the new concept of Christ likeness that is developed in it.

PURGATION

In the prologue to the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure insists that any attempt to know God must begin with prayer, because prayer purges the will of pride and teaches it humility.⁶⁷² The sign that the will has been purified is love for Christ. Love in turn is demonstrated in the way Christ demonstrated love when He abandoned His will to the Father and humbly turned Himself over to suffer and die

⁶⁷¹ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, 696 B; *The Celestial Hierarchy*, 165C.

⁶⁷² Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, 1.7.

on the cross.⁶⁷³ That is to say, love is evidenced by an active lifestyle of self-abandoning service. Anyone who commits to a life of poverty undergoes the purification of the will, through which the mirror of the mind is ‘cleansed and polished’.⁶⁷⁴

As its primeval holiness is recovered, the intellect regains awareness of itself as an image of God. It is hierarchized. While all human beings retain the image of God, Bonaventure insists that only those with rightly ordered wills are conscious of the image and are therefore properly called *likenesses* of God.⁶⁷⁵ In those that become likenesses through the purification of the will, the *innate* intellectual powers are again *infused*.⁶⁷⁶ The powers consist in the *a priori* knowledge of the eternal reasons that “are beyond error, doubt, and judgment,”⁶⁷⁷ which lend meaning to all things and which lay the foundation for all true and certain knowledge.

Inasmuch as intellectual holiness reinstates access to the rules whereby mere science is transformed into wisdom, it gives the mind an “immediate disposition towards wisdom.”⁶⁷⁸ Without holiness, Bonaventure does not think any scientific endeavour can attain the status of wisdom and thus achieve absolute truth and certainty.⁶⁷⁹ Since love for Christ is what motivates the intellect to lead a holy life, the intellectual life of one who lacks love of a distinctly Franciscan sort, and therefore holiness, can never prosper.⁶⁸⁰

Those who love Christ and evidence this through a life of poverty, by contrast, gain total and instant access to the rules that are in Christ, that is, to the *a priori* knowledge of Being and the transcendentals. In this way, the pure in heart are awakened to the three ways of knowing the Being of God that unfold from the intuitive knowledge of Being.⁶⁸¹ Since the Being known is univocal, or the same in

⁶⁷³ Idem., *Itinerarium*, prologue 3; see also Ilia Delio, “The Role of the Crucified in Bonaventure’s Doctrine of Mystical Union,” *Studia Mystica* 19 (1998): 8-20.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., prologue 4.

⁶⁷⁵ Bonaventure, *Commentaria, liber secundus*, 16.2.3.

⁶⁷⁶ Idem., *Itinerarium*, 1.2.

⁶⁷⁷ Idem., *Collations*, 2.2.10.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.2.6; see also Gregory LaNave, *Through Holiness to Wisdom*, 71.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., 73.

⁶⁸⁰ Bonaventure, *Collations*, 19.3.

⁶⁸¹ Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 115; Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center*, 47: both authors affirm that the three proofs unfold from the first proof, from interiority and that the three

all cases, Bonaventure concludes that the restoration of the interior awareness of Being predisposes the mind to be directly illumined with the knowledge of Him wherever it turns to look, namely, to that which is exterior, interior, or superior to the mind itself. In other words, it enacts the possibility of knowing like Christ, with the help of Christ.

Quite different from the gradual journey towards an ultimate intellectual goal Augustine and Anselm envisaged, the mind's journey into God as Bonaventure understands it is a journey with an end the intellect has always already reached. Coming to this realization is entirely a matter of the will. If the will is abandoned to Christ and this is evidenced by a life of poverty, the three immediate routes to God are instantly opened up.⁶⁸²

ILLUMINATION

Exterior

In the first two chapters of the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure discusses the way the one with a pure heart is illumined with the knowledge of God through vestiges, or through the experience of external, empirical objects. He reiterates the point he made in his earlier questions on the Trinity that the existence of finite beings presupposes the existence of an infinite Being.⁶⁸³ On the basis of the contention that this Being is the first object of the intellect, Bonaventure concludes that the mind cannot help but see that creatures bear witness to the existence and nature God through their own existence and natures.⁶⁸⁴

Interior

Although Bonaventure discusses the way to God through creatures first, in keeping with the traditional order of things, he suggests in the prologue to the *Itinerarium* and states explicitly in other writings that interior knowledge necessarily

ways to God outlined in the *Itinerarium* correspond to the three proofs on the *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio trinitatis*. Jay Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 207: the author argues that the *Itinerarium* presupposes the univocal interconnectedness of all beings.

⁶⁸² Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 79.

⁶⁸³ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, 1.1.3-4.

precedes the knowledge of exterior and superior things. On his account, it is by turning inwards that one ‘remembers, understands, and loves’ the self.⁶⁸⁵ In remembering oneself, he reiterates in chapters three and four, one remembers that one’s mind is innately impressed with the knowledge of Being, or the image of God, which immediately joins the intellect to God Himself and makes His existence self-evident to the mind.⁶⁸⁶

Insofar as the discovery of God within reinstates awareness of the *a priori* rules of judgment, it further enables efforts to ‘fully analyze’ reality through the cooperation of memory, understanding, and will.⁶⁸⁷ In addition to enabling the mind to find God in the first order knowledge of beings, as described above, Bonaventure states that the intuitive knowledge of Being enacts the possibility of second order philosophical reflection on beings. The Seraphic Doctor distinguishes between three types of philosophical reflection: the natural, the rational, and the moral.⁶⁸⁸ Natural philosophy includes metaphysics, mathematics, and physics; rational philosophy includes grammar, logic, and rhetoric; and moral philosophy deals with individual, domestic and political issues.

The middle chapters of the *Itinerarium* represent Bonaventure’s first major attempt to bring his Christocentric perspective to bear on his assessment of philosophy. His basic line of contention is that it is practically impossible to engage in any genuine philosophical reflection on reality without love for Christ, inasmuch as love for Him gives access to the ideal forms of all things that are located in His mind and that disclose the true meaning of all reality. This intellectual manoeuvre represents Bonaventure’s attempt to justify study within the Franciscan order and even to present the Franciscan perspective as the condition of possibility of all valid intellectual pursuits.

In subsequent years, the Seraphic Doctor would extrapolate the implications of his Christocentric outlook even further in the process of mounting an attack on a

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., 2.7-8.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., 3.1.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.2.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid., 3.4.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 3.6.

group of radical Aristotelians that became influential in the University of Paris early in the 1260's. As I discuss these developments in the university's history and the Seraphic Doctor's response to them, I aim to give a fuller picture of the assessment of philosophy he offers in the *Itinerarium*.

The radical Aristotelians, who were led by a master of arts called Siger of Brabant, were not followers of Aristotle so much as they were proponents of an extreme Averroist interpretation of Aristotle. To Bonaventure's mind, the most problematic view they espoused was the theory of 'double truth'. Siger and his followers believed there were truths of reason and separate truths of faith. While they thought it possible to demonstrate the validity of philosophical truth, they did not think the same could be said for the truths of faith. For this reason, they concluded that truths of faith should always be subjected to philosophical verification.

Bonaventure believed just the opposite. In his opinion, science answers to the rules of wisdom, not the other way around. True philosophical understanding can only be found in the context of faith. Where Thomas Aquinas attempted to correct the errors of the Averroists by producing more accurate interpretations of Aristotle's writings, Bonaventure's strategy was to undermine their arguments altogether. A series of lectures he began in 1267 eventually led to the official condemnation of Siger's teachings in 1270. A final series of lectures Bonaventure delivered at the university in 1273, called the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, have been described as his "summa on Christ the centre."⁶⁸⁹ In these lectures, the Seraphic Doctor explains most elaborately how Christ can and must be seen as the centre of all lines of theological, philosophical, and practical inquiry.⁶⁹⁰ He exhaustively elucidates the implications of his belief that Christ represents the ideal forms of all realities and their meaning must be sought in Him.

The criticisms of Aristotle that Bonaventure presents in his *Collationes* are founded on that belief. The chief criticism applies to the Aristotelian denial of

⁶⁸⁹Ilia Delio, *Crucified Love*, 126.

⁶⁹⁰Bonaventure, *Collations*, 1.13; Zachary Hayes, "Christ: The Universal Center," in *The Hidden Center*, 192-214; Ilia Delio, *Crucified Love*, 125-6.

exemplarity,⁶⁹¹ where “the supreme Exemplar is Christ.”⁶⁹² Because the radical Aristotelians refused to acknowledge that knowledge depends upon divine exemplars, Bonaventure charges them with being “unable to consider how things originate, how things are led back to their end, how God shines forth in them, [and therefore to] achieve true understanding.”⁶⁹³ In sum, he claims that their denial of exemplarity leaves them hopelessly prone to err.⁶⁹⁴ For this reason, the Seraphic Doctor counsels his readers to maintain a critical attitude when evaluating the work of such thinkers. After all, he writes, the ability to gain true and certain understanding of reality is “the privilege of the highest contemplatives, not of natural philosophers.”⁶⁹⁵

Bonaventure’s critique of Aristotelian philosophy has given rise to a scholarly controversy concerning his view of philosophy.⁶⁹⁶ Etienne Gilson’s contention was that Bonaventure had almost nothing positive to say about Aristotle and philosophers more generally from the very first days of his career.⁶⁹⁷ Gilson perceived two main ways of dealing with the introduction of Aristotelian thought in the late Medieval West: the way of Bonaventure, who rejected Aristotle out of a conservative desire to remain faithful to the Augustinian tradition, and the way of Aquinas, who boldly determined to accept much of Aristotle’s thought. For Gilson, the attitudes of Bonaventure and Aquinas towards Aristotle were indicative of the posture they assumed towards philosophy as theologians.

While Bonaventure considered the relationship of philosophy to theology to be heteronomous, Aquinas thought philosophers capable of coming to valid conclusions autonomously.⁶⁹⁸ Although Bonaventure never explicitly challenged Aquinas for embracing the thought of non-Christian philosophers, he certainly did

⁶⁹¹ Bonaventure, *Collations*, 6.6.2.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, 18.9.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3.2.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.7.3.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.15.

⁶⁹⁶ Robert J. Roch, “The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure: A Controversy,” *Franciscan Studies* 19 (1959): 209-26; see also Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History*, 119-58; Hendrikus van Der Laan, O.F.M., “The Idea of Christian Philosophy in Bonaventure’s *Collationes in Hexaemeron*,” in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274-1974*, vol. 3, 39-56.

⁶⁹⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History*, 120.

⁶⁹⁸ Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 87.

intimate that Thomas was “in danger of putting too much confidence in Aristotle.”⁶⁹⁹ In fact, his *Collationes* may have contributed to Thomas’ implication in a second condemnation of radical Averroism in 1277.

Unlike Aquinas and much like Augustine, albeit as Gilson understands Augustine, Bonaventure had no confidence in the competence of human reason to gain understanding apart from faith.⁷⁰⁰ Indeed, for Bonaventure, this is precisely what the motto *fides quaerens intellectum* suggests.⁷⁰¹ On the basis of belief in Gilson’s claims, scholars accept Bonaventure’s negative assessment of philosophy as a sign of his commitment to Augustine.⁷⁰²

In Gilson’s own day, the professor’s thesis was challenged by Fernand Van Steenberghen, who argued that Bonaventure had a great affinity for Aristotle.⁷⁰³ Although this contention soon proved to be based on a limited understanding of Bonaventure’s writings and intellectual agenda, there was some truth to it.⁷⁰⁴ Bonaventure did not refuse to acknowledge or even cite philosophical authorities, even though he did always subject them to the faith.

With the insights of Gilson, Van Steenberghen and others in view, Joseph Ratzinger balanced the views on this matter. He distinguished Bonaventure’s general critique of Aristotle, which can be found in the earlier writings, from the outright rejection of radical Averroist Aristotelianism that surfaces in the later works.⁷⁰⁵ Although Bonaventure always distinguished himself from Aristotle on certain issues, above all, exemplarity, Ratzinger notes that this did not prevent him from referring to Aristotle where Aristotle’s ideas were not inimical to the faith. Although the Seraphic Doctor did reject the radical interpretation of Aristotelian

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 138.

⁷⁰⁰ Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 33.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 15; Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 23.

⁷⁰² Effrem Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 125; Scott Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition*, 115; Joseph Owens, “Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience,” 440-1; Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History*, 122.

⁷⁰³ Robert J. Roch, “The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure: A Controversy,” 222.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid., 226.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., 134.

philosophy that was developed in the 1260's, he did not fail to acknowledge the intellectual advances that had been made by the historical Aristotle.⁷⁰⁶

The tempered account of Bonaventure's relationship to Aristotelian philosophy Ratzinger formulated has since become the common view.⁷⁰⁷ With this one qualification, however, Gilson's account of the heteronomous relationship of philosophy to theology in Bonaventure's thought still stands, since it truly does capture the 'spirit' of Bonaventure's philosophy.⁷⁰⁸ Contrary to popular belief, however, it is not an accurate depiction of Augustine's views. Admittedly, Augustine explained how all sciences *can* contribute to growth in Christian wisdom in *De Trinitate*, his early Cassiciacum dialogues, and elsewhere. By that same token, however, he did not deny the legitimacy of scientific endeavours undertaken outside the context of Christian wisdom, as Bonaventure tended to do.

Instead, the bishop accepted the fact that faithless reasoning is the practical consequence of the fall. The theory of knowledge he developed from his Christian standpoint, far from excluding the perspectives of those that adhere to other philosophical and religious beliefs, engaged other perspectives conversationally. Augustine considered non-Christian thinkers, especially Platonists, capable of attaining great insight into the truth. Unlike Bonaventure, he did not think the philosophers could not know at all. He simply believed they did not always know *what* they know—the Triune God—or *how* they know it—through the Incarnation of God's Son.⁷⁰⁹

Inasmuch as philosophical minds grasp the truth, Augustine affirmed that they grasp God's Truth and that their understanding can therefore inform the Christian understanding of the Triune God.⁷¹⁰ Augustine urged his readers to allow their understanding to be informed in this way, knowing that faith is brought to bear on 'pagan' reasoning in the process. As faith and reason are thus reconciled, the

⁷⁰⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History*, 159.

⁷⁰⁷ Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 4.

⁷⁰⁸ J. Guy Bougerol, *Introduction*, 31; Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 35.

⁷⁰⁹ Luigi Gioia argues this point in, *Theological Epistemology*, 66; see also Augustine, *conf.*, 7.9 (CCL 27, 101-3).

⁷¹⁰ Augustine, *doct. chr.*, 2.40 (CCL 32, 73-5).

faith of the one reconciling them is bolstered and the power of faith to perfect reason is obviated in the sight of the faithful as well as the faithless.

By embracing the perspectives of those outside the Christian circle, Augustine believed the redemptive work of Christ could be carried forward. Far from formulating an account of Christian wisdom that refuses to recognize the ‘wisdom’ of the philosophers, the bishop explained how to embrace it, and thus showed how to know Christ and make Him known in a world where He is not universally known. To assume Bonaventure’s attitude towards philosophy would be for Augustine to deny the real effects of the fall and thus to foreclose the possibility of redemption, which was the diametric opposite of his intent.

In the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure concisely states his view on the role of philosophical studies in the context of giving an account of the way God is known at the intellectual level. In showing that there is in fact a place, and only one place, for intellectual pursuits, that is, within the Franciscan context of love for God, he emphasizes that gaining understanding “is more a matter of affective experience than rational consideration.”⁷¹¹ No matter how much philosophical knowledge a person has, Bonaventure’s opinion is that knowledge amounts to nothing if it is not subjected to the wisdom of Christ. Moreover, knowledge can only be referred to Christ if the intellect has been purified by a passionate love for Him, which manifests itself in a life of poverty and suffering that imitates Christ’s own passion. In summary, the Franciscan lifestyle is the precondition of all valid academic endeavours.

Superior

In chapters five and six, Bonaventure treats the knowledge of God that can be achieved simply by analyzing the thought of God Himself. Since God is the Supreme Being, Bonaventure affirms that He is good without qualification, or that than which no greater can be thought. Appealing to Anselm’s *Proslogion*, he argues that the Supreme Being that exists in the mind must also exist in reality, because He

⁷¹¹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, 4.2.

is whatever it is better to be than not to be, and to exist is better than not to exist.⁷¹² Because God is Being itself, and the existence of Being is implicit in the innate knowledge of Being, His existence is so certain in itself that He cannot be thought not to be. Indeed, God is closer and more intimately known by the mind than the mind knows itself.⁷¹³

Bonaventure closes this section by explaining his belief that this Being must be Triune, for He would otherwise be unable to diffuse Himself in the created order and make all things expressions of His love, as He manifestly does. The Seraphic Doctor further recalls that the Triune nature of God is summed up in the Person of the Son, who fully reveals the poor, humble, and self-giving nature of God's love upon the cross.

A stronger commitment to loving Christ and to expressing love as He did through a life of poverty, humility, and self-abandonment, gives easier access to the knowledge of God that comes through that which is exterior, interior, and superior to the mind itself. Since what is known in all instances is God's loving nature, Bonaventure concludes that the one whose love is perfect knows God perfectly and therefore does not know at all but transcends the realm knowledge, abandoning the intellect and indeed the whole self to achieve ecstatic union with God.

UNION

In the seventh chapter of his *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure presents Francis' experience on Alverna as the paradigm case of ecstatic union. Because of the self-deprecating humility he exhibited in increasing measure, Francis became consumed with love for Christ, and for that reason, he was finally fully conformed to Christ's likeness on that mountaintop. Since his lifestyle was so literally patterned after Christ's, he was visibly marked with the wounds of Christ, which were the ultimate signs of a humble and self-emptying nature. Because of those wounds, Francis, like Christ after His crucifixion, was transported in death to the bosom of the Father.⁷¹⁴ When he crossed over into ecstasy, Bonaventure states that the saint "invited all truly

⁷¹² Ibid., 6.2.

⁷¹³ Idem., *Collations*, 12.11.

⁷¹⁴ Idem., *Itinerarium*, 7.3.

spiritual men to this kind of passing over and spiritual ecstasy.”⁷¹⁵ Anyone wishing to be like Christ, he sums up, should follow in the footsteps of Francis, the *alter Christus*.⁷¹⁶

CHRIST LIKENESS IN THE *ITINERARIUM*

In the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure clearly does not present a traditional Augustinian account of conformity to Christ’s likeness. For Augustine and Anselm, conforming is a matter of the intellect *and* the will, knowledge *and* love. Since the divine object of knowledge and love is not immediately present, Augustine affirms that the full knowledge and love of Him can only be anticipated in faith and desire, respectively.

For Bonaventure, likeness to Christ is primarily a matter of the will or love for Christ, where love is defined in a self-abandoning or even self-deprecating sense. On Bonaventure’s account, such love is best expressed in the poverty and humility of the Franciscan lifestyle. In order to assert the primacy of love with reference to knowledge, Bonaventure defines love in an absolute sense, or in a sense that precludes knowledge. For him, self-abandoning love is the precondition of intellectual operations, and it is the goal of intellectual operations. In both cases, however, love leaves room for no intellectual operations. In the first instance, the indicator of love for Christ is the voluntary abandonment of the will, which pays no regard for reason. In the second, love entails the transcendence of reason and thus the ultimate act of self-abandonment that accompanies ecstatic union with God.

By affirming that the Franciscan life of love is both the point of entry and goal of cognition, at least cognition that is true and certain, Bonaventure accomplishes the two-fold polemical task he set for himself when he ascended Alverna, which was to persuade the spirituals that there is a place for study if the life of the Franciscan and to vindicate the intellectual life of the friars minor in the eyes

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Idem., *The Life of St. Francis*, prologue 2 & 6.11; see also Ignatius C. Brady, “St. Bonaventure’s Theology of the Imitation of Christ,” in *Proceedings of the Seventh Centenary Celebration of the Death of St Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1975), 61-72.

of the university masters.⁷¹⁷ In demonstrating that there is a place, and only one place, for the acquisition of knowledge, namely, between purgation and union, Bonaventure demonstrates that the acquisition of knowledge can lead to the fulfilment of Franciscan goals and that a Franciscan mindset is actually required for intellectual success, *vis a vis* the spirituals and university masters, respectively.

On Bonaventure's account, love is the way into knowledge because it gives access to Christ's wisdom concerning all things that are outside, inside, and above the mind. In other words, it awakens the mind to the innate knowledge of Being that renders the human subject the adequate foundation for perfect and complete knowledge of all realities. The reason for the mind's adequacy is the *concursus* of Christ, whose reasons keep the cognitive power fully actualized after access to the power itself has been gained through love, such that love is not actually required for the ongoing use of the power. Like his definition of love, consequently, Bonaventure's understanding of knowledge is an absolute one. Bonaventure conceives knowledge in an immediate or totalized sense in the effort to give an account of knowledge consistent with Francis' experience of reality, himself, and God.

Knowledge attained by these three means is knowledge of the ways in which God's love is immediately present in the real world order. In virtue of the univocal interconnectedness of the love that is manifested in all instances, such knowledge is bound to quickly usher the one that truly loves God into the presence of Love itself and thus into a realm that is beyond knowledge, which is of no importance once ecstasy is attained.

For Bonaventure, in summary, likeness to Christ is mainly a matter of manifesting His love, which entails the abandonment of the self and eventually reason. Ascending to God, in other words, means 'condescending' in humility to serve the lowliest of beings, until one descends so low as to lose oneself.⁷¹⁸ Becoming like Christ is definitely not a cognitive process as it is for Augustinians. It

⁷¹⁷ Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 19: "Bonaventure's work is understood as an attempt to institutionalize the primitive spirit and to preserve the peace of the order in the face of conflicts over learning and poverty."

⁷¹⁸ Ilia Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 130-40; also *passim* in *Crucified Love*.

is hardly a process at all, owing to the fact that love and knowledge are absolutes that do not admit of gradual growth. If conforming to Christ is a process in any respect for Bonaventure, then it is a process of becoming more freely self-abandoning. It is in giving up one's will in the absence of reasons that one gains access to the power of reason that is itself given up when the will is fully conformed to Christ and thus passes over with Him in ecstasy to the bosom of the Father.

Although Augustine is often described as the intellectual source of Bonaventure's voluntarism, his account of conforming to God's image resists such an interpretation of him. For Augustine, conformity to Christ is brought about by the intellect and the will together. Desire, which anticipates the fullness of love, motivates acts of reasoning in faith, which anticipates total knowledge of God. Through those acts, the image on the mind is gradually renewed and both faith and desire are increased until one forms a habit of reasoning in faith and in the desire for God. Any intellectual growth is the result of that desire. Conversely, actions or expressions of love are indicative of intellectual growth.

In this account, neither love nor knowledge is described in an absolute sense. Rather, they are conceived as subject to gradual growth. For Augustine, the non-absolutist character of knowledge and love as they are experienced in this life through faith and desire is not detrimental, because the deficit is precisely what encourages the human person to overcome it through acts of knowing by negation, which require the cooperation of faith and desire, and which ultimately lead to the positive encounter with God that is only attainable in the life to come. While Augustine admittedly argues that the process of knowing by negation is set in motion by love for God that is initially expressed in self-negation, he does not consider the terminus of self-negation to be self-abandonment but self-recovery. In his opinion, only the fully recovered self can begin to know how to serve and thus to love others. Such a self is fully conformed to the image of Christ.

Plainly, Bonaventure did not intend to promulgate an Augustinian account of conforming to Christ's likeness in the *Itinerarium*. Far from it, he sought to explain Christ likeness in a manner that was not only consistent with the Franciscan vision but that would also help him resolve the problems that plagued the order at the time.

When he retreated to Alverna, he did so in hopes of coming up with a plan for persuading the spirituals that study is not inconsistent with Franciscan principles and for convincing the university masters of the friars' intellectual legitimacy.

By transforming Francis' spiritual experiences into a normative standard and showing the role knowledge can play in meeting that standard of ecstatic union, Bonaventure accomplished both feats simultaneously. His account of Christ likeness effectively trumped the arguments of both the spirituals and the masters against intellectual endeavours within the order, inasmuch as he showed that there is no way to achieve intellectual and spiritual perfection but the Franciscan way, which entails knowledge, at least for at time. Those that opposed the intellectual life of the friars minor could have no rebuttal to this line of contention, according to which Franciscans need intellectual pursuits for their success, and intellectual pursuits need Franciscans for theirs. Even if there were opponents, they could not question the authority of Augustine, Anselm, and Pseudo-Dionysius, all of whom Bonaventure had enlisted in the service of St. Francis for the purpose of perpetuating his vision and putting it in a position to philosophically prevail.

Divine Illumination

A tendency to take arguments about illumination at face value has led scholars to the unanimous conclusion that "there is no essential difference between Augustine and Bonaventure's theories of illumination."⁷¹⁹ Admittedly, both Augustine and Bonaventure employ illumination to metaphorically illustrate the work of the intellect that works like Christ. The arguments I have presented thus far, however, serve to indicate that the two theologians understand the work of the intellect that works like Christ in very different, even incompatible, ways.

Bonaventure's version of the illumination account illustrates *his* concept of human cognition. In earlier sections of this chapter, I identified what that concept of cognition entails and how it differs from Augustine's by tracing the way Bonaventure derives it from his doctrine of God and concomitant doctrine of the image of God. In this section, I will focus on the two texts in which Bonaventure

⁷¹⁹ Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 79.

states his views on illumination very explicitly, namely, the fourth of his *Quaestiones disputatae scientia Christi* and the short tract, *De reductione artium ad theologiam*. In treating these and other supplementary texts, I highlight how the description of illumination Bonaventure gives in them corresponds to the description of his theory of cognition I have already provided on the basis of his other writings.

One of the first points Bonaventure establishes in his fourth question is that all human beings possess an innate ‘cognitive light’, which infused by Christ when one’s will is converted to Him.⁷²⁰ This light, he states, is the knowledge of Being, and it “sends out three primary radiations:”⁷²¹ unity, truth, and goodness. These rays shine without fail.⁷²² Like Christ who irradiates them, they are “beyond error, doubt, and judgment.”⁷²³

The Seraphic Doctor refers to these rays of light as the eternal reasons. He stresses that the reasons are not the objects of knowledge, but only the lights by which the intellect evaluates reality (*lumen intelligendi*).⁷²⁴ They are necessary for human knowledge, “because there can be no certain knowledge except where there is immutability on the part of the object known and infallibility on the part of the knower.”⁷²⁵ Since Christ contains the eternal reasons that render created forms immutable and knowledge of them infallible, His light can be equated with the human cognitive light.

According to Bonaventure, the inner light of Christ makes it possible for the mind to be directly illumined with the knowledge of God in the three main ways, namely, through an exterior light (*lumen exterius*), through the interior light itself (*lumen interius*), and through a superior light (*lumen superius*).⁷²⁶ By means of the eternal reasons Christ imparts, which constitute the inner light, the human mind

⁷²⁰ Bonaventure, *DQKC*, qu. 4 conclusion.

⁷²¹ Idem., *Collations*, 4.4.2 & 4.4.5.

⁷²² Ibid., 4.4.1.

⁷²³ Ibid., 2.2.10.

⁷²⁴ Ibid., & 11.13: God is the light of understanding (*lumen intelligendi*); *DQKC*, qu. 4 conclusion; *Christus unus omnium Magister* 18.

⁷²⁵ Bonaventure, *DQKC*, qu. 4 conclusion.

⁷²⁶ Idem., *The Reduction of the Arts to Theology (De reductione atrium ad theologiam)*, trans. Zachary Hayes (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1996), 6. This text represents Bonaventure’s mature and concise summary of the modes of illumination he had discussed in his earlier *Itinerarium* as well as in the *Collations*, according to J. Guy Bougerol in his *Introduction*, 163.

becomes competent to compare its ideas about created forms with His, and thus to achieve absolutely true and certain knowledge about them.⁷²⁷ When the mind judges created reasons by those eternal reasons, it cooperates with its ‘inner master’, Christ, who therefore renders human knowledge of external reality ‘perfect’.⁷²⁸

Owing to the fact that the mind presupposes awareness of the divine Light in all its efforts to perceive reality by the light, Bonaventure concludes that, “nothing can be understood at all unless God immediately illumines the subject of knowledge by means of the eternal divine truth.”⁷²⁹ Despite the fact that God Himself is beyond reach, Bonaventure indicates here, He “is closer to the mind even than the mind is to itself,”⁷³⁰ inasmuch as He is the mind’s own power. Whenever the mind considers its power in the knowledge that it is a sign of God’s presence within, it truly knows itself. In the same instance, moreover, it cannot help but know God, given that His Light shines forth in the mind “in a manner that cannot be stopped.”⁷³¹

The interior awareness of Christ’s illumining presence through the transcendental concepts thus renders the human subject the adequate foundation for all knowledge of realities outside, inside, or above itself. In his *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, Bonaventure elaborates this line of contention. There, he argues that all illumination received through exterior and interior lights must be traced back or ‘reduced’ to the superior light of Sacred Scripture, which communicates the fullness of God’s wisdom in the story of Christ’s passion and crucifixion.⁷³²

If the sciences through which the external world are studied (weaving, metal-working, architecture, agriculture, hunting, navigation, medicine, and drama⁷³³) and the philosophical lines of inquiry pursued by the intellect (natural philosophy, rational philosophy, and moral philosophy⁷³⁴) are not considered with reference to the superior light, or the relevant forms in the mind of Christ, inquiry into them cannot produce wisdom. It cannot illumine. Christ must be situated at the centre of

⁷²⁷ Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 97.

⁷²⁸ Bonaventure, *Christus unus omnium Magister*, 21.

⁷²⁹ Idem., *DQKC*, qu. 4 arguments for the affirmative 24.

⁷³⁰ Idem., *Collations*, 12.11.

⁷³¹ Ibid., 5.5.1; see also 4.4.1 & 6.5.31.

⁷³² Idem., *De reductione*, ch. 5.

⁷³³ Ibid., ch. 2.

⁷³⁴ Ibid., ch. 4.

all study if study is to have any meaning whatsoever.⁷³⁵ On Bonaventure's account, human sciences exist for the sole purpose of promoting union with Christ, which is not achieved through knowledge itself but through love.

If anyone pursues knowledge without love, Bonaventure cautions, their efforts are bound to be in vain.⁷³⁶ The one who loves Christ and seeks to see how His love is made manifest by undertaking various lines of inquiry, by contrast, will eventually achieve the union with love which is the "supreme illumination...beyond the range of investigation of the human intellect."⁷³⁷ In this, Bonaventure writes, the mind is "carried above every sense and every rational operation"⁷³⁸ as it enters into "to the super-essential ray of the divine darkness."⁷³⁹

This investigation of illumination in Bonaventure's thought confirms that his version of the account illustrates his broader views on knowledge. Illumination is a metaphor for Christ's gift of the transcendental concepts, through which the human subject becomes fit to represent all realities with perfect accuracy and certitude. Incidentally, this unprecedented level of interest in the representational accuracy and certitude of ideas by no means denotes any genuine concern regarding the possibility of knowledge. Rather, the preoccupation with cognitive certitude in Bonaventure is indicative of a polemical interest in establishing that a Franciscan outlook is required for the attainment of all genuine knowledge.⁷⁴⁰

Inasmuch as acts of cognition supervised by the innate concepts that generate true and certain ideas are acts of cognition under the direct guidance of Christ, illumination is an extrinsic influence that affords the cognitive capacity, enters into the process of cognition, and acts as the guarantor of cognitive certitude. In these respects, it is something super-added to what the human person would possess of

⁷³⁵ Ibid., ch. 26.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ Idem., *Collations*, 20.11.

⁷³⁸ Ibid., 2.1.32

⁷³⁹ Idem., *Itinerarium*, 7.5. See also *Collations*, 20.11.

⁷⁴⁰ See Charles Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 81; Theodore Crowley, "Illumination and Certitude," 431-48; Bernard A. Gendreau, "The Quest for Certainty in Bonaventure," 104-227; Zachary Hayes' introduction to *DQKC*, 55-9; M. Hurley, "Illumination According to St. Bonaventure," 389.

their own accord. Without the super-addition of grace to nature, nature would be incapable of performing its 'natural' operations.

In contrast to this view, Augustine conceived illumination as the source of an intrinsic or natural capacity to increasingly participate in a unifying or abstractive mode of cognition, which is proper to human beings and which mimics God's knowing of Himself. Inasmuch as the capacity operates of its own accord—engaging in the process of cognition, producing concepts, gaining certainty—illumination enters into those other aspects of cognition as well. Although Augustine affirms that the mind is illumined in these respects by an inner master called Christ, he does not suggest by this statement that Christ interferes with knowing in any way. He only flags the fact that the knowing agent is aware that the purpose of independently performed cognitive acts is to illumine God.

Not only does Augustine's understanding of the sort of knowledge that is attained by illumination differ from Bonaventure's, but his view of the means by which it is achieved also differs. Where Bonaventure defined knowledge as the subjective representation of reality, Augustine saw it as a matter of objective participation in God's knowledge of Himself. While Bonaventure believed knowledge by representation was produced on account of the *concursus* or extrinsic conditioning of Christ, Augustine affirmed that knowledge by participation was obtained through the 'flowing-in' (*influentia*) or intrinsic gift of the intellectual capacity that comes from Christ. Far from being essentially indistinguishable, the theories of knowledge by illumination Augustine and Bonaventure present are, for all practical purposes, irreconcilable.

Bonaventure the Augustinian?

In this chapter, I set out to challenge a received view and show that Bonaventure is not an Augustinian with respect to the theory of knowledge by illumination. My strategy was to trace the difference between the theories of illumination the two theologians espouse to a fundamental theological difference. Bonaventure advocated a Victorine doctrine of the Trinity, which both motivated and enabled him to give a new account of creation in God's image. In his metaphysics, essentialism replaced participation, and for this reason, a univocal concept of the

relationship between created beings and the divine being substituted for the traditional analogical theory of being.

The Victorine doctrine also had an impact on Bonaventure's idea of the *imago dei* and its intellectual operations. When he expressed that idea, I showed that he codified a new standard of knowledge by subjective representation which diverged from Augustine's theory of knowledge by participation. The Seraphic Doctor's standard had the effect of supplanting Augustine's view of the knowledge of God 'by negation' in favour of a theory that allows for positive and direct insight into the nature of God.

Where cognition had been enabled by the gift of an intrinsic cognitive capacity in Augustine's thought, acts of knowing as Bonaventure defined them depended upon the extrinsic conditioning of certain *a priori* or transcendental ideas. Those *a priori* ideas lay the proper foundation for the subject's efforts to perfectly represent realities within, outside, and above itself. On this assumption, Bonaventure re-constructed Anselm's 'formula' for conforming to God's image as an *a priori* proof for the existence of God. Inasmuch as he defines Christ's illumination as an extrinsic influence rather than an intrinsic one, the Seraphic Doctor evidently presupposes a *concursus* model of causality rather than the *influentia* model of Augustine.

Because Bonaventure's standard of knowledge presupposed that the cognitive capacity is always fully actualized, or that there are no noetic consequences of the fall, he did think the redemptive work of Christ served to help human beings overcome those effects and re-conform to the image of God. Although his *Itinerarium* is usually placed in a line of traditional Augustinian works that outline the process of re-conforming, it cannot legitimately be coupled with those works, inasmuch as it rejects the negative theological project that is undertaken in them and introduces an altogether innovative idea of Christ likeness.

In Bonaventure's account of Christ-likeness, the will that loves takes absolute priority over the intellect that knows. Love and knowledge are assigned new connotations. Love is not self-recovering as in Augustine but self-deprecating; knowledge is not a matter of increasing participation but of subjective representation. Furthermore, in Bonaventure, both love and knowledge are defined in an absolute

sense, such that they tend to preclude one another. On the assumption that neither love nor knowledge could be actualized in the present life, Augustine by contrast contended that human persons can only increasingly anticipate the attainment of love and knowledge through desire and faith. For this reason, he believed that the will and the intellect stand in a mutually inter-dependent relationship and that both enter in to every act of knowing.

While in Bonaventure's account, the Christ-like person would lead a Franciscan life of poverty and self-deprecating humility, the conformed person on Augustine's understanding could be a person of any kind who had discovered how to harness the intellect and the unique talents God had given for the purpose of knowing Him and making Him known, that is, for the expression of His love. Where Augustine's motive was to teach readers with various gifts and with a strong commitment to Christ to use any and all the abilities they had for the purposes of faith, Bonaventure's intent was to present Francis of Assisi the paradigm case of Christ likeness.⁷⁴¹

In this effort, as I have shown, the Seraphic Doctor conceptually departed from Augustine in virtually every theological and philosophical area, not least in his use of the illumination account. The fact that Bonaventure continued to employ traditional Augustinian and Anselmian arguments has masked the fact that he makes a distinctly Franciscan departure. When one traces the philosophical arguments back to their theological source, however, the differences between the Franciscan Augustine of Bonaventure and Augustine himself come into relief.

In distinguishing Bonaventure from Augustine, I have not intended to imply that there is anything inherently problematic about thinking differently from Augustine at the theological or philosophical level. In fact, I consider it acceptable practice to attempt to forge a new intellectual path, especially where there is a need for particular intellectual resources suited to accomplishing particular intellectual tasks. Even Bonaventure's attempts to 'disguise' his innovative views in the arguments of Augustine and Anselm are perfectly acceptable, since it was common practice in the thirteenth century to appeal to authorities in advancing one's own

views, and this indeed was what the scholar was expected to do. In highlighting the non-Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought, I had one goal in mind, namely, to do the preliminary work that is required to properly identify the cause of the decline of divine illumination theory in the thought of Bonaventure's immediate Franciscan successors.

⁷⁴¹ Scott Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition*, 128.

V. AQUINAS

(c. 1225-1274)

Introduction

If Bonaventure is not *the* late Medieval representative of the Augustinian tradition, then one may wonder who is. In this chapter, I submit that the thirteenth-century proponent *par excellence* of Augustine's illumination theory is the Seraphic Doctor's Dominican counterpart, Thomas Aquinas. This claim may come as a surprise to some, for despite the fact that his doctrines of God and God's image are widely recognized as Augustinian, Thomas' philosophy is usually labelled 'Aristotelian'.⁷⁴² Moreover, his philosophical Aristotelianism is often thought to preclude philosophical Augustinianism. The evidence that Aquinas rejects Augustinian philosophy can supposedly be found in his arguments against illumination and *a priori* proofs for God's existence, the twin pillars of Augustinian thought which Franciscan thinkers upheld.⁷⁴³

The Aristotelian interpretation of Aquinas' philosophy was popularized during the late nineteenth century. By that time, Catholic theologians had grown dissatisfied with the usual fideistic responses to modern philosophical challenges. Amongst them, there was a growing interest in the project of formulating rational Christian rebuttals to the rationalist philosophies that prevailed during the period, most of which were variations on Cartesian and Kantian thought. Pope Leo XIII believed that the recovery of Aquinas would make it possible to offer such a

⁷⁴² See Bruce D. Marshall, "Aquinas the Augustinian? On the Uses of Augustine in Aquinas' Trinitarian Theology," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, ed. Michael Dauphinais, Barry David & Matthew Levering (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007); Timothy L. Smith, *Thomas Aquinas' Trinitarian Theology: A Study in Theological Method* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003). On Aquinas' appropriation of Augustine's doctrine of *imago dei*, especially as presented in *De Trinitate*, see D. Juvenal Merriel, *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990); John P. O'Callaghan, "Imago Dei: A Test Case for St. Thomas' Augustinianism," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 100-44; Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, vol. 2: Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 80-100.

⁷⁴³ Effrem Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 14; F.C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy*, 192-3; Ewert Cousins, *Coincidence of Opposites*, 2; Kent Emery, "The Image of God Deep in the Mind: The Continuity of Cognition according to Henry of Ghent," in *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277*, 59. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001; Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 22; Edward P. Mahoney, "Sense, Intellect, and Imagination," 610; Timothy B. Noone, "The Franciscans and

response. In his 1879 encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, he called for a renewed focus on the thought of Aquinas.

His call was issued on the assumption that Thomas regarded philosophy as an autonomous discipline and therefore believed natural reason was fully competent to operate apart from faith. These were the very conclusions Augustine, Bonaventure, and virtually all Medieval thinkers in between them would have roundly refused to accept. Aquinas' efforts to emancipate reason from faith were allegedly inspired by Aristotle, whose thought the Angelic Doctor adopted in full. Following Aristotle's lead, Aquinas used natural reason to demonstrate the existence of God from what is known in the natural order, *a posteriori*, and thus without recourse to revelation or to the *a priori* arguments commonly invoked in the Franciscan tradition.

When Aquinas innovatively developed such a natural theology, many Leonine Thomists believed, he gave Catholic theologians the resources they needed to defend the rationality of faith on grounds rationalist philosophers such as Descartes and Kant would find acceptable.⁷⁴⁴ In conjunction with the summons issued in *Aeterni Patris*, consequently, Catholic theologians began to appeal to Aquinas in their attempts to address modern thinkers on their own terms. As a result, numerous interpretations of Thomas' thought developed which were mostly based on the aforementioned assumptions about the overall shape of his thought and his indebtedness to Aristotle.⁷⁴⁵ In time, such assumptions came to be taken for granted in the broader academic context, especially amongst philosophers of religion that made it their business to rationally establish the existence of God.⁷⁴⁶

Although this movement of thought was always gaining momentum, it did not escape opposition. Karl Barth famously rejected the Catholic natural theological

Epistemology: Reflections on the Roles of Bonaventure and Scotus," 63-90; Joseph Owens, "Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience," 452-4; John Rist, *Augustine*, 78.

⁷⁴⁴ Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 35; Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The 'Divine Science' of the ST* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 4-5.

⁷⁴⁵ Mark D. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas after His Readers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 88. Important Leonine Thomists were Joseph Kleutgen and Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange; the noteworthy promulgators of 'transcendental Thomism', inspired by Kant, included Joseph Maréchal, Karl Rahner, and Bernard Lonergan.

⁷⁴⁶ See footnote 810.

project.⁷⁴⁷ Resistance also came from within Catholic circles. Etienne Gilson, for instance, emphasized the *Christian* character of Aquinas' philosophy against those that described it as pre-theological. As an avid Neo-Thomist himself, however, he continued to depict Aquinas as an Aristotelian and as an innovator who departed with good reason from the longstanding Augustinian tradition.⁷⁴⁸

In his rigorous studies of Aquinas' texts, Marie-Dominique Chenu paid close attention to context, content and structure.⁷⁴⁹ These researches revealed to his mind that many of his contemporaries were distorting Thomas' thought and misconstruing his relationship to authorities. Far from rejecting Augustine and forging a totally unprecedented conceptual path, Chenu found that Aquinas remained a faithful follower of Augustine on theological as well as many philosophical matters.⁷⁵⁰ Because Chenu's writings challenged the viability of the reading on which the Neo-Thomist agenda rested, they were condemned by the Roman curia. For decades, interpretive efforts like his were frowned upon, if not forbidden.

Since the second Vatican council of 1965, Catholic thinkers have regained the freedom to read Thomas outside the auspices of institutional interpretations of his thought. As this freedom was exercised, scholars more generally were inspired to re-evaluate Aquinas' writings and qualify his relationship to Aristotle and other authorities. Fergus Kerr has greatly helped to usher in a new era in the scholarship on Aquinas. As he tells the story of the late nineteenth-century revival of Thomism, gives an account of the development of numerous versions of Thomism since that time, pointing out where interpretations prove more or less accurate when compared to the spirit and structure of Aquinas' work, he makes it possible to set new interpretive trends in thought on Aquinas.⁷⁵¹

⁷⁴⁷ Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 35-6

⁷⁴⁸ Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L.K. Shook (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1957).

⁷⁴⁹ Fergus Kerr, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 29.

⁷⁵⁰ Marie-Dominique Chenu, O.P., *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, trans. A.-M. Landrey, O.P., and D. Hughes, O.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1950), 155.

⁷⁵¹ See *After Aquinas; Catholic Theologians*; "On Varieties of Interpreting Aquinas" in the volume he edited, *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation* (London: SCM, 2003); "A Different World: Neoscholasticism and its Discontents," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8:2 (2006): 128-48.

Mark Jordan has also contributed significantly to this effort. He highlights the way and extent to which Thomas' works were deliberately misread and rewritten by theologians seeking to use them for institutional purposes. Even more, he outlines a way of reading Thomas' works, which actually entails *reading* them.⁷⁵² As part of this project, Jordan nuances Aquinas' relationship to Aristotle and philosophical authorities.⁷⁵³ Outside of his commentaries on Aristotle's works, Jordan points out that Aquinas did not prioritize Aristotle, but cited him alongside many other sources.⁷⁵⁴ Moreover, he subsumed the authorities he cited into a framework that was not theirs but his.⁷⁵⁵ In many cases, he used one thinker's arguments in order to elucidate the ideas of another which we wanted espouse himself.

Because Aquinas invokes some authorities explicitly and others implicitly, Jordan insists that it is impossible to identify his real relationship to authorities without attending to the sense he wished the arguments he borrowed to convey. For this reason, Aquinas' "actual inheritance of Aristotle must be studied topic by topic, passage by passage."⁷⁵⁶ To reduce Thomas' thought to Aristotelian thought in Jordan's opinion is to betray the real Thomas, who had learned all sorts of conceptual languages in order to give the most effective explanation of his ideas and at the same time open up the lines of communication with thinkers from all kinds of intellectual traditions.⁷⁵⁷ Bearing all this in mind, one can readily conclude that Thomas Aquinas did not regard Aristotle's arguments "as solid units to be transported whole [but] as sources or occasions for invention."⁷⁵⁸

The inventive work that needed to be done was that of articulating Dominican ideals so as to enable Dominicans to achieve the goals of the order. Dominic had founded his order in response to the Cathar heresy. From the moment of its

⁷⁵² Mark D. Jordan, "The Summa's Reform of Moral Teaching and Its Failures," in *Contemplating Aquinas*, 41-54; see also *Rewritten Theology*, 4 ff.

⁷⁵³ See Mark D. Jordan's fourth chapter on "Thomas' Alleged Aristotelianism," in *Rewritten Theology* pages 60-88 or, *The Alleged Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992).

⁷⁵⁴ Mark D. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 82.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 85; see also David B. Burrell *Knowing the Unknowable God* and the essays on Aquinas' relationship to thinkers of other faiths in, *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004).

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

inception onwards, consequently, the Dominican order concerned itself with apologetic tasks.⁷⁵⁹ To accomplish these tasks, Dominicans had to be well versed in the Scriptural and philosophical texts adherents of non-Christian monotheisms invoked. Furthermore, they needed to be outstanding moral examples. The credibility of their witness depended upon it.

As Alasdair MacIntyre has shown, Aquinas found in Augustine the resources he needed to give his account of moral inquiry, and he put Aristotle's eudemonism to work in the effort to freshly reiterate Augustine's ethical views.⁷⁶⁰ In recent years, other scholars have called attention to areas in which Aquinas owes an obvious debt to Augustine.⁷⁶¹ Jean-Pierre Torrell contends at the start of his two-volume work on Aquinas' life and teachings that the Angelic Doctor perpetuates the Augustinian and Anselmian tradition of 'faith seeking understanding'.⁷⁶² Other academics have focused on correcting misperceptions of the general shape of Aquinas' thought, some with and others without extensive reference to his use of authorities.⁷⁶³

As this brief survey of some pertinent scholarship illustrates, the effort to rectify the scholarly perception of St. Thomas' thought is well underway. One can only hope that it will soon be possible to say the same of Bonaventure. Although much progress has been made, there is more work to be done in order to reverse the interpretive trends that were set by certain Neo-Thomist thinkers.⁷⁶⁴ Thomas' voice has yet to be heard over the voices of his re-writers on many issues, and illumination is one of them.

If Neo-Thomist arguments were to carry weight, it had to be true that Aquinas abandoned Augustinian illumination in favour of Aristotelian abstraction.

⁷⁵⁹ See Roger Cunningham and Andrew French, *Before Science*, chapter eight on "Dominican Education." There, the authors explain how Dominican scholarly and apologetic methods developed out of their founding principles. Their discussion focuses on the work of Albert the Great and Aquinas and on the way the two appropriated philosophical resources for evangelistic purposes.

⁷⁶⁰ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991); see especially chapters five and six.

⁷⁶¹ See the introduction to *Aquinas the Augustinian*, especially page xv, for a list of contemporary scholars that discuss Aquinas' indebtedness to Augustine.

⁷⁶² Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P. *Saint Thomas Aquinas, vol. 2: Spiritual Master*, 4-5, 378-80.

⁷⁶³ Rudi te Velde's study of Thomas' understanding of philosophy, theology, and their inter-relationship in *Aquinas in God* is noteworthy here, as well as the aforementioned works of David B. Burrell and John I. Jenkins' *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

In this case as in many others, the message of Thomas' texts was re-construed for polemical purposes, and as a result, a crucial aspect of his thought was neglected. Out of curiosity, one Aquinas scholar once had a graduate student search through every book and journal article on every available bibliography related to the study of St. Thomas for references to illumination. His assistant found only a handful of articles that even touched on the topic.⁷⁶⁵ That was almost thirty-five years ago, and scholarly attentions have yet to make a significant turn towards the topic of illumination, even though major advances in this area have recently been made.⁷⁶⁶

The irony of the situation is that Aquinas' major works are virtually littered with references to illumination, very few of which are negative. While it is true that Thomas argues against illumination in some passages, I will show that his charges are only levelled against the version of the account that belonged to Bonaventure, even if he does not name his opponent, in accordance with the academic custom of the day. The same holds true in the case of Aquinas' alleged 'rejection' of Anselm's 'ontological' argument.⁷⁶⁷ In both cases, Thomas was not questioning the views of predecessors but contemporaries, who were successfully championing misinterpretations of the original views in question. Scholars that take Aquinas to be objecting to Augustine and Anselm themselves overlook the fact that he immediately moves from correcting a false interpretation to explaining what he believes is a true one.

In this chapter, I give a relatively brief explanation of Aquinas' treatment of knowledge and illumination, limiting my discussion to the *Summa Theologiae*.⁷⁶⁸ From this point in the thesis onwards, I will not demonstrate how any thinker including Aquinas derives his illumination theory from Trinitarian doctrine. In this

⁷⁶⁴ See the introduction to *Aquinas the Augustinian*, xvi.

⁷⁶⁵ James H. Robb, "St. Thomas on Intelligible Light" in The Tenth Annual Suarez Lecture (Mobile, AL: Spring Hill College, 10 March 1974), 36.

⁷⁶⁶ John Milbank has described the place of illumination in Aquinas' thought and the fundamentally Augustinian character of his outlook on this and other issues in his chapter titled, "Truth and Vision," in *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2001), 19-59. Also see *The Suspended Middle*, 88-103.

⁷⁶⁷ Scott Matthews points this out in his chapter on the reception of Anselm's argument amongst Aquinas and the Dominican school in *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition*, 151-4. In doing this, he follows Anton Pegis in "St. Anselm and the Argument of the *Proslogion*."

⁷⁶⁸ Other works in which Aquinas discusses illumination extensively include the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (book three), trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 1.51-60 and *Exposito in librum Boetii de Trinitate*, ed. B. Decker (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 1.1.3

chapter as in the next, I will simply explain the account of knowledge and illumination that is given by a particular thinker. Here in the case of Aquinas, I will highlight the similarities between his thought on illumination and that of Augustine and will suggest that this is indicative of continuity on the preliminary theological levels. That Aquinas works on continuity with Augustine as it concerns the doctrines of God, God's image, and so forth, is not questioned. The goal here is simply to show that continuity of thought on divine illumination follows logically from continuity of thought on these theological matters. Where relevant, I will point out how Thomas incorporates Aristotle in giving his account of knowledge. In doing this, I seek to further bolster the contention that Aquinas employs Aristotelian not to mention other forms of argumentation for the sake of innovatively conveying the sense of Augustine's ideas.

Thomas' account of human knowledge and illumination is situated within his treatise on human nature (articles 75-102). That treatise is itself nestled between his accounts of the knowability of God's existence and essence and His Triune nature, all of which falls within the first part of the *Summa*, and the account of Christian virtue he gives in the second. The latter section is followed by a third in which Aquinas develops his theology of the Incarnation. Once I have explained his account of cognition and the way illumination features in it, I will discuss the relationship between 'ordinary' knowledge, the knowledge of the Triune God's existence and essence, and the moral life lived in imitation of Christ, as the structure of the *Summa* suggests should be done.

Through this discussion, I aim to show that Aquinas, far from rejecting illumination, composed his *Summa Theologiae* with the whole goal of fuelling an increase in illumination. Not unlike Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Anselm's *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, his treatise is a manual for conforming to the image of God. Since Aquinas conceived the Triune nature of God and His image in roughly the same way as Augustine and Anselm, he envisioned the process of re-conforming to the image in a similar fashion as well. Although his explanation of the process differs from the others, the discrepancies are usually in form and length as opposed to content. Those discrepancies do not undermine Aquinas' intellectual fidelity to Augustine and his tradition but rather confirm it, for when he translated the

traditional theological content into other forms of expression, Aquinas made the timeless message intelligible in a new context and by a different audience, which nonetheless resembled the readership of Augustine and Anselm.

Aquinas' readers were his Dominican charges, who like the understudies of Augustine and Anselm, were "already familiar with Christian theology, its concepts and principles and the philosophy it presupposes, but who stood in need of the intellectual habituation by which the principles in the field, the articles of faith, became the foundation and cause of their thinking."⁷⁶⁹ In summary, Aquinas' readers were intellectually gifted persons who had taken Dominican vows and were seeking to learn how to engage all their abilities in the effort to better understand and testify to their faith.⁷⁷⁰

In Aquinas' day, there was a special need for a theological-pedagogical text which would assist them towards these ends. Prior to his time, Dominicans had tended to separate the Scriptural and philosophical treatises they needed for their apologetic work from the moral manuals by which they endeavoured to live.⁷⁷¹ This created a bifurcation of work and faith which was contrary to the Dominican spirit itself. In the *Summa*, consequently, Aquinas sought to bring the two types of treatise together. Although the *Summa* has long been regarded as a dry philosophical treatise ready-made to be fragmented, Jordan shows that it is actually a single chain of reasoning through which Aquinas teaches his readers how to cultivate the habit of thinking theologically about their work, or how to become wise.⁷⁷² To put it in my own words, the *Summa* a guide to conforming to the image of God.

In the process of conforming Aquinas outlines over the course of his treatise, illumination has a key role to play. Although I argue this, my purpose here is not to give a comprehensive account of illumination or any other aspect of Aquinas' thought. I have included a chapter-length excursus on Aquinas' ideas about knowledge and illumination because it was germane to investigation of illumination in Augustinian and Franciscan thought. The inquiry into Aquinas reinforces that a

⁷⁶⁹ John I. Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith*, 5.

⁷⁷⁰ See Mark D. Jordan's chapter on "Writing Secrets in a Summa of Theology" in *Rewritten Theology*, 170-85.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

genuine Augustinian does *as* Augustine did, not necessarily *what* Augustine did. When the thirteenth-century situation is regarded from this perspective, the reverse of the common opinion turns out to hold true: Aquinas rather than Bonaventure can be seen to uphold Augustine's theory of knowledge by illumination.⁷⁷³ In arguing this, I take an indirect approach to throwing the non-Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought into relief. In the same instance, I give a preliminary indication of the central place illumination holds in Aquinas' thought and so implicitly issue a call for more research that does justice to it.

Knowledge & Divine Illumination

Before he explains how illumination informs the work of the intellect, Aquinas discusses how the senses, imagination, and intellect cooperate in the act of knowing. On his understanding, knowing begins at the level of sense perception; the first objects of the intellect are empirical rather than transcendental. Once the five external senses have obtained sense data, the internal sense or imagination forms a phantasm of the object that is under consideration.⁷⁷⁴ Those phantasms are stored in the memory.

The intellect is responsible for abstracting intelligible species, or ideas, from phantasms. Aquinas describes the intellectual capacity as a power, that is, something the human being *has* as opposed to what the human being actually *is*.⁷⁷⁵ It was in equating the intellectual capacity with the essence of the human being that Bonaventure bolstered his view that the capacity is always actualized or equipped for the perfect and complete comprehension of objects. His understanding of the intellect led him to define abstraction as knowledge of the exact correspondence between thought and essential reality.

By defining the intellect as a power, in contrast, Aquinas construed the intellect as the source of the potential to gradually actualize the essence of what it is

⁷⁷² Mark D. Jordan, "The Summa's Reform," 45; see also *Rewritten Theology*, 120.

⁷⁷³ On page 47 of "Truth and Vision" Milbank stresses that Aquinas did not reject Augustinian illumination or Anselm's argument. See also *The Suspended Middle*, 96-7 and Jacob Schmutz, "Causalité et nature pure," 232.

⁷⁷⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 11, 1.78.3-4.

to be human, through ongoing participation in the unifying way of thinking that is the mode of existence proper to human beings and indeed to God.⁷⁷⁶ Thomas' understanding of abstraction therefore differed greatly from Bonaventure's. It was an Aristotelian as opposed to an Avicennian understanding, according to which the work of the active intellect is to infer a universal concept from numerous related phantasms so as to make them intelligible or 'light them up'.⁷⁷⁷ When the intellect abstracts an idea, Thomas writes, the class of objects under consideration takes on immaterial 'existence' within the knower.⁷⁷⁸ The idea is impressed upon the memory or 'possible intellect' of the knower, where it remains available to assist in efforts to render new experiences intelligible.⁷⁷⁹

On Aquinas' account, new experiences are what incite the intellect to revise and expand the original species, to cognitively encompass more of reality by means of its growth, and thus to increasingly participate in it. Since the power to know is a potential one, Aquinas stresses that the clarity and accuracy of the intelligible species must be achieved by degrees.⁷⁸⁰ Unlike Bonaventure, Aquinas does not believe that perfectly clear ideas can be immediately attained. In his view, only God and angelic beings have recourse to such intuitive knowledge.

For him, formulating a species means forging a conceptual resource to facilitate new discoveries rather than grasping a reality in a fixed and final way. Because discovery is ongoing, the three main faculties—sensation, imagination, and intellection—are in constant co-operation. There is not even a hint of dualism in Aquinas' theory, where it is acknowledged that human knowledge must be refined through experience and effort. Those efforts, which are made in abstraction, allow what is objectively the case to be increasingly, subjectively realized. In affirming this, Aquinas prioritizes the objective order over the knowing subject, by contrast to

⁷⁷⁵ Joseph Owens, "Aquinas on Cognition as Existence," in *Thomas and Bonaventure* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 74-85.

⁷⁷⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 11, 1.79.1-2.

⁷⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.79.4. See David Burrell's chapters on, "Aquinas and Scotus: Contrary Patterns for Philosophical Theology" and "especially "Creation, Will, and Knowledge in Aquinas and Duns Scotus" in *Faith and Freedom*. Burrell superbly explains Aquinas' account of knowledge and contrasts it with the Franciscan one espoused by Scotus.

⁷⁷⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 12, trans. Paul T. Durbin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.84.2.

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 11, 1.79.6

Bonaventure.⁷⁸¹ Moreover, he articulates an account of cognition consistent with that of Augustine, albeit in Aristotelian terms.⁷⁸²

After explaining abstraction, Thomas turns to consider the relationship between the ideas the mind forms in abstraction and the ‘eternal reasons’ that are received through divine illumination.⁷⁸³ He starts by distinguishing between two senses in which the reasons could conceivably be known. In the first place, they could be the actual objects of knowledge; in the second, they could serve as the principles of knowing, much like the sun is the principle of vision. In agreement with Bonaventure, Aquinas rejects the notion that the reasons can be seen directly in the present life and affirms that they now act only as the principles that make intellectual vision possible.

When it comes to defining what sort of reasons the principles provide, however, Aquinas disagrees with Bonaventure. The latter believed the reasons are the innate transcendental concepts acquired through illumination. For him, the transcendentals are the principles of cognition inasmuch as they govern acts of abstraction to ensure the truth and certitude of the ideas the intellect produces. Through those concepts, Bonaventure argued that God cooperates with the active intellect, helping it form ideas that correspond to His.

Since Thomas holds that sensible rather than transcendental objects are the mind’s first objects, he denies that illumination affords *a priori* concepts. Although he challenges Bonaventure’s interpretation of illumination, Aquinas by no means rejects the theory altogether. Instead, he clarifies what he thinks illumination does in fact involve. For him, the divine light is the source of the innate cognitive capacity for abstracting reasons from phantasms. That is to say, the divine light is an intrinsic force which is at work inasmuch as the God-given power is put to work.

Because Augustinian illumination has been defined in one way or another as an extrinsic influence, Thomas’ tendency to conflate illumination with the gift of the

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid., vol. 12, 1.85.5

⁷⁸¹ Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 27.

⁷⁸² Harm Goris argues this point in, “Theology and Theory of the Word in Aquinas: Understanding Augustine by Innovating Aristotle,” in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 62-78.

⁷⁸³ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 12, 1.84.5

agent intellect has been regarded as a fundamentally anti-Augustinian one.⁷⁸⁴ Yet I have shown that illumination does not entail extrinsic conditioning in Augustine's thought. Long before Thomas, the bishop contended that the mind is illumined *to illumine*. What it passively receives from God is nothing but the ability to be an active knowing agent. If Augustine's illumination theory has been defined in an extrinsic sense, such that it precludes Aquinas' interpretation, it is only because Bonaventure saw illumination as an extrinsic conditioning and assigned that view to Augustine which Reformation thinkers found suitable for their own purposes and thus promulgated in the modern period.

Far from undermining Augustine's vision of knowledge by illumination, Aquinas perpetuates it by identifying the divine light with the source of a capacity to cognize in the way Aristotle described, which resembles the way of Augustine. By equating illumination with the cognitive capacity, Aquinas does not deny that the light is involved in other aspects of cognition, such as the ongoing process of knowing, the generation of cognitive content and certitude, and the knowledge of God, as he is often accused of doing. Inasmuch as all those aspects of cognition entail the use of the cognitive capacity, illumination enters into them. Yet it enters in a way that does not rob the mind of its ability to perform its proper function of its own accord, as illumination on Bonaventure's understanding was prone to do.

Aquinas finds the conceptual resources to affirm without contradiction that every act of knowing is entirely a human initiative and that is fully supported by God in an *influentia* model of divine causality, according to which God's primary causality instils in human beings the very ability to act as secondary causes.⁷⁸⁵ In this model, the success of human acts is attributed to God, not because He imposes knowledge or performs the act of knowing itself, but because He gives the power to work on one's own initiative in the first place and is therefore the indirect cause of the acts of knowing the human being directly affects.

⁷⁸⁴ Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 96, ff.; C.E. Scheutzinger, *Augustine's Illumination Theory*, 41.

⁷⁸⁵ See Jacob Schmutz, "Causalité et nature pure," 222-6; John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle*, 88-103; David Burrell, "Aquinas and Scotus: Contrary Patterns for Philosophical Theology," 91-112; Guy Mansini, O.S.B., "Without Me You Can Do Nothing: St. Thomas with and without Augustine on

In Aquinas' view, the power to illumine reality or abstract ideas from phantasms is a natural one. By what he calls the 'natural light' of reason, natural objects can be known. Moreover, natural reason is capable of inferring from its knowledge of natural objects that there are principles of order or causes of nature. Although such 'transcendental' ideas are not intuited at the outset of cognition as Bonaventure thought, Aquinas argues that the knower can gradually learn to associate effects with their transcendental causes.⁷⁸⁶ To improve at the art of abstraction is simply to improve at this skill of relating many to one, which is the skill of knowing in an intuitive manner. By these means, Aquinas states that the philosopher can even grasp that the natural order must have a divine cause and end.

When Aquinas spoke of these truths to which natural reason is able to attain, he was not advocating a natural theology like the one many Neo-Thomists attributed to him. By truths of reason, Thomas referred to the kinds of truths all monotheist thinkers would uphold. Muslims, Jews, and even Greek philosophers like Aristotle were all monotheists in the sense that they reasoned in the belief that a divine being is the source and goal of all reality.⁷⁸⁷ Natural reason, as Aquinas understood it, is still reason that works within the context of monotheist faith.

Although he admits that non-Christian monotheists are able to reach the conclusions that God exists, that He has ordered nature, and so on, Aquinas acknowledges the impossibility of inferring from the natural order that the God in question is Triune. To know that He is, Christian revelation is required, that is, the revelation of the Incarnate Son of God. When he grants that there are two types of truth, one attainable by natural reason and another only through Christian revelation, Thomas by no means implies that Christian truth is just one among many equally plausible truths as Bonaventure insinuates that he does.⁷⁸⁸

John 15:5," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*; Rudi te Velde, "A God of Grace," in *Aquinas on God*, 147-70.

⁷⁸⁶ See Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

⁷⁸⁷ Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 65.

⁷⁸⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (book one), trans. Anton C. Pegis (Notre Dame, The University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 1.3.2.

Quite the opposite, Aquinas opens up ways to demonstrate the unmatched profundity and veracity of Christian faith. By accepting reason's competence to figure out the way things work in its own sphere, Aquinas enacts the possibility of appropriating intellectual resources non-Christian monotheists have to offer in the effort to understand faith. This practice of 'spoiling' secular resources, which Augustine had sanctioned, makes it possible to bring Christian faith to bear on the use of those resources and thus substantiate and where necessary correct the insights of non-Christian thinkers. That is to say, it gives the Christian thinker the chance to show *why* things work the way they work, namely, because the God who makes all things work is Triune and has revealed Himself as such through the Incarnation.

Although all monotheists in Aquinas' day desired to give an account of the way reality derives from God and of the ability the human mind has to attain to Him, only the Christian doctrines could enable one to say how these things actually come about, that is, how the transcendent spills into the immanent and how the immanent can reach up to what is transcendent. Granting reason some independence put Thomas in the position to point the way towards the satisfaction of monotheist intellectual desires. In sum, it made a way to "engage with diverse religious traditions."⁷⁸⁹

While Thomas admittedly adhered to a theory of two truths, he did not thereby imply that reason *can* operate without faith in the Trinity. Rather, he realistically acknowledged that it *does* operate in this way. At the same time, he made room for Christian thinkers to reconcile faith and whatever they evaluate by the light of reason, testifying to the truth of their faith in the process. Inasmuch as he articulates an account of human knowledge in which there is space for the apologetic work that is the *raison d'être* of the Dominican order, Aquinas gives an account that is wholly consistent with that of Augustine, whose theory of knowledge was oriented in all respects towards the redemption of human reason.

⁷⁸⁹ Fergus Kerr, "The Varieties of Interpreting Aquinas," 33; David Cunningham and Andrew French, *Before Science*, 189.

Knowledge of God

In order to accomplish redemptive intellectual work, Aquinas believes an added ‘light of grace’ is needed. The light of grace is the revelation of God’s Triune nature through His Incarnate Son. In the opening question of his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas reiterates the point that natural reason is unable to uncover the true identity of the supernatural source and end of the natural domain.⁷⁹⁰ As he explains, the mind can only gaze on a given reality if it has a ‘species’ proper to that reality. Since human beings abstract species from corporeal creatures, they naturally possess no species suited to grasping the divine.⁷⁹¹ Although abstraction stimulates the desire to know the one Being that unites all beings, it frustrates the desire, insofar as it is impossible to abstract one’s way to God.

For this reason, Aquinas concludes that the species that reveals the Trinity can only be acquired through the revelation of the Incarnate Christ: the light of grace.⁷⁹² When the natural light becomes receptive to this light in faith, the intellect regains the potential it lost at the fall to have God as its first object. According to Aquinas, that potential can be actualized in one of two ways. In the first way, the intellect actually sees the species itself and gazes on the very essence of the Triune God.⁷⁹³ So long as human beings inhabit a realm in which creatures are approximating their essences through participation in their various modes of existence, however, it is not possible to face a God whose essence is His existence.⁷⁹⁴ A vision of the ‘light of glory’ is unattainable in the present life. It is the kind of vision only God and the blessed can have.

Although it is not possible to know God directly, Aquinas affirms that His ‘species’ can now be known in another way. In explaining this way, Aquinas introduces Aristotle’s distinction between two kinds of science.⁷⁹⁵ Some sciences, like arithmetic and geometry, proceed by way of their own principles. Others proceed according to principles that are dictated by a higher science. Music, for

⁷⁹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 1, trans. Gilby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.1.1.

⁷⁹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, trans. Herbert McCabe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.12.4.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, 1.12.5.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1.12.9.

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.12.12.

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 1.1.2; see Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*.

instance, follows rules it receives from arithmetic. In relation to arithmetic, music is what Aristotle called a subalternate science.

On Aquinas' account, theology, or 'sacred doctrine' (*sacra doctrina*), is this sort of science. It is subalternate to the vision of the Triune God that God Himself and the blessed have.⁷⁹⁶ Though human beings cannot enjoy the science of the Trinity, they can proceed according to the principles of that science. That is to say, they can reason according to faith in the Triune God Christ revealed. *Sacra doctrina*, as Aquinas explains it, includes an account of the doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation. In that sense, it is a purely speculative science. Yet it also instructs how to apply those principles through efforts to evaluate reality in light of them, how to argue *from* the first principles rather than to them, as other monotheists are constrained to do.⁷⁹⁷ In this sense, *sacra doctrina* is a practical science.⁷⁹⁸ Inasmuch as it is a speculative science, it would seem that *sacra doctrina* accomplishes what Augustine had in the first half of his *De Trinitate*; Anselm in his *Monologion*. So far as it is practical, sacred doctrine entails the same sort of inquiry Augustine outlined in the latter half of his treatise on the Trinity and that Anselm delineated in his *Proslogion*.

In the second sense, sacred doctrine or knowledge in the light of God's grace is not a properly constituted body of knowledge so much as it is a way of perceiving the body of natural knowledge under a certain formality.⁷⁹⁹ That formality is faith in the Trinity.⁸⁰⁰ To the extent the intellect has a habit of perceiving reality 'in God', all that is seen by the light of natural reason is seen at once in the light of grace. The mind that is illumined knows that it is illumined by the Triune God. Because it is resultantly *divinely* illumined, every natural act of knowing serves to adjust the eyes of the mind to the brilliant light of glory.⁸⁰¹ Every unifying cognitive act, in other

⁷⁹⁶ Richard A. Lee, "Aquinas and Theology as Subalternate Science" in *Science, the Singular, and the Question of Theology* (New York: Palgrave: MacMillan, 2002), 33-58.

⁷⁹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 1, 1.1.2.

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.1.4. The distinction between practical and speculative sciences comes from Aristotle; on this topic, see Rudi te Velde's *Aquinas on God*, 21.

⁷⁹⁹ Mark D. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 90.

⁸⁰⁰ See Rudi te Velde, "Understanding the *Scientia* of Faith: Reason and Faith in Aquinas' *ST*," in *Contemplating Aquinas*, 68; see also John Milbank, "Truth and Vision," 24, 35.

⁸⁰¹ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 3, 1.12.7.

words, cultivates wisdom and thus becomes, “a remote anticipation of the final beatified intuition” of the Wisdom of God.⁸⁰²

After he treats the scope and aims of sacred doctrine in the first question of the *Summa*, Aquinas introduces his famous five proofs for God’s existence.⁸⁰³ The first issue Aquinas addresses here concerns whether His existence is self-evident.⁸⁰⁴ Thomas contends that it is not and goes on to distinguish between two types of self-evidence. On his account, a proposition may be self-evident in itself, but not to the mind, or self-evident in itself *and* to the mind. While he affirms that God’s existence is self-evident in itself, he does not believe, as Bonaventure does, that the knowledge of God remains self-evident to the mind after the fall.

On the grounds that the knowledge of God is not *a priori*, Thomas rejects the reading of Anselm’s argument, obviously Franciscan, according to which it is. For him, an awareness of God as constant as the awareness of the world is not one that is always maintained but one that must be regained. In faith, God is reinstated as the first object of the intellect. Even then, however, His reinstatement is only a potential one. The intellect must subsequently strive to make faith effective by forming a habit of evaluating reality in the light of belief in God, until He is *actually* restored as the intellect’s governing idea or first object. Although the mind with faith initially “receives obscurely all the conclusions of divine science,”⁸⁰⁵ it remains for it to discover the significance of those conclusions, as per Plato’s *Meno* paradox.⁸⁰⁶

Since God cannot be known *a priori*, Aquinas insists that His existence must be demonstrated *a posteriori*. One must infer from effects to cause rather than the other way around.⁸⁰⁷ He goes on to list his ways to demonstrate God’s existence, most of which are drawn from Aristotle’s writings.⁸⁰⁸ The first way is the argument from motion, according to which whatever is in motion must have been put in motion

⁸⁰² John Milbank, “Truth and Vision,” 51; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 67; on *sacra doctrina* as training in Augustinian wisdom.

⁸⁰³ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 2, trans. Timothy McDermott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.2.1.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁵ John Milbank, “Truth and Vision,” 42-3.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁸⁰⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 2, 1.2.2.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid., 1.2.3; see Aristotle’s *Physics*, 8.10.266a-267b and *Metaphysics*, 12.7-8.1071b-1047b in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, as cited by Kerr in *After Aquinas*, 70.

by a first mover. The second is from efficient causality, or the idea that no effect is its own cause. The third way is from possibility and necessity. According to Aquinas, all creatures are contingent. They did not have to exist, but were brought into existence by a Being whose existence is in fact necessary.

The fourth way is found in the gradation of things. Among beings, Aquinas writes, there are greater and lesser goods. Since there are degrees of goodness, these must be included in and surpassed by the maximal good, which is God. The fifth and final way has to do with final causality. All beings serve some purpose, Aquinas contends, which they do not determine for themselves. Therefore, there must be an intelligent Being by whom all natural things are directed to their end, and this is God.

Aquinas' five ways have been interpreted in many ways. Neo-Thomists of various kinds tended to describe them as pre-theological proofs for God's existence, and this sort of interpretation is one many philosophers of religion have advanced.⁸⁰⁹ More recently, scholars have started to stress that the proofs must be deciphered with a view to the context provided by the surrounding questions, overall structure, and authorial intent of the *Summa*.⁸¹⁰ Bearing these issues in mind, Eric Mascall has argued that the five ways do not argue to but presuppose God's existence. They are not proofs per se but approaches to discovering what it means that He exists by considering the world in view of the fact that it depends on God.⁸¹¹ Similarly, Rudi Te Velde contends that the proofs are for the purpose of rendering the belief in God intelligible.⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁹ See Fergus Kerr, "The Varieties of Interpreting Aquinas," in *Contemplating Aquinas*, 28, ff. Kerr mentions a number of contemporary philosophers who espouse such a reading of Aquinas' proofs: David Braine, *The Reality of Time and the Existence of God: The Project of Proving God's Existence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988); Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1990); Anthony Kenny, *The Five Ways: St. Thomas Aquinas' Proofs for God's Existence* (London: Routledge, 2008); Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism in Aquinas' 'Summa contra gentiles I'*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001); Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁸¹⁰ Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 56; Rudi te Velde, "Understanding the *Scientia* of Faith," 71; Mark Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 154.

⁸¹¹ See Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 69 and Eric L. Mascall, *He Who Is: A Study in Traditional Theism* (London: Longman Green, 1966), 80-2.

⁸¹² See Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 39; for related accounts of the five ways, consult Eugene Rogers, *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); Timothy McDermott, *Introduction to the ST*, vol. 2: *Existence and the Nature of God* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964); Lubor Velecky, *Aquinas' Five Arguments in the ST* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

These are the sorts of interpretation that I want to push forward in what follows. To do that, however, I must first discuss the contents of the subsequent section of the *Summa*, which treats the knowability of God's essence. At the start of the section, Aquinas argues that God's nature needs to be discovered through what He is not, namely, creatures, since it is not possible to know what His essence is. Knowing God 'by negation', as I have explained previously, entails thinking about the creatures or circumstances one faces in view of the fact that they are not ultimate as God is. He is the Highest Good from whom all things derive their goodness.⁸¹³ He is the infinite, omnipresent, immutable, eternal one that is utterly distinct from finite, mutable, temporal beings.⁸¹⁴ To have Him rather than whatever is under consideration is to have happiness.

The intellect that evaluates reality with these things in mind forms a perspective on things that is informed by the knowledge of God as the Highest Good. As it reasons in faith, the intellect reconciles reason and faith in the only place possible, that is, in its own perspective. Thoughts formulated in faith do not bear on God but only on the creatures under consideration. They reveal something about creation rather than Creator. Even so, God is known through the mediation of the idea formed in faith inasmuch as faith has affected the formation of the idea and thus the evaluation of temporal circumstances.

The perspective on the circumstances that is informed by faith enables one to see God's hand in them, that is, to see Him in His effects; it therefore predisposes the mind for the vision of the cause. In sum, the view of reality in the light of God doubles as the knowledge of God attainable in this life. It is the knowledge of Him that can be acquired through thinking about the things He is not. Put differently, it is knowledge by negation or 'analogical' knowledge of God. Though thoughts and words about the things that come to pass in God's order are not thoughts or words about the essence of God, they apply analogously to Him in the sense that faith has impacted the formation of the thoughts and words themselves.

⁸¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 2, 1.4.2, 1.6.1-4.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.2.7-10.

Following Kerr, I contend that Aquinas' five theistic proofs serve as "the first lesson in Thomas' negative theology."⁸¹⁵ Far from an "exercise in rationalist apologetics,"⁸¹⁶ the proofs are designed to facilitate the mind's efforts to put things in proper perspective, that is, to think in terms of the fact that whatever is known is not ultimate, while God is. One might employ the first argument, for instance, in reflecting on the way God has orchestrated certain events in what has proven in retrospect to be the best way. The second proof might be used to give credit to God for some good one has done, since God bestows the ability to do good in the first place.

The third way could be invoked in expressing thanks to God for the way events in one's life have worked out, in view of the fact that it is totally out of human control to determine a future course of events. One might appeal to the fourth way in marvelling in increasing measure at God's goodness. Although God always remains the ultimate good, His goodness appears to increase from the perspective of one who persists in thinking of things in light of belief in His goodness. Using the fifth way, one can assess a situation in view of the fact that all things work together for good.

When considered along these lines, the five ways come forward as conceptual resources designed to help the reader think about everything that is and that happens from the perspective of faith in God. They are tools intended to facilitate efforts to know God through knowing the things He is not. Since all things that are 'not God' can be seen 'in God', Aquinas affirms that even that which appears to pose a challenge to faith, for example the Cathar heresy, can become occasions for growth in faith. In short, there is nothing that cannot be redeemed by the mind. There is no situation in which it is impossible to bring faith to bear on that which reason assesses. Conversely, there is no way to reconcile reason and faith but to do so by reconciling them in one's own perspective on a particular situation, so as to identify and testify to the efficacy of God in it.

The concern of Thomas Aquinas like Augustine and Anselm before Him was to aid his readers' efforts to cultivate this habit of reasoning in faith. The intellect

⁸¹⁵ Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 58; "Theology in Philosophy: Revisiting the Five Ways," *Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 50: 1/3 (2001): 15-30.

with such a habit sees all things, at all times, and in all places in God. Consequently, it sees things in a manner that is consistent with the belief in God's ultimate goodness and all that His goodness entails: infinity, eternity, omnipresence, and so forth. Since it has learned to automatically see effects in relation to the divine cause, the intellect is predisposed to intuitively identify the divine cause both in His effects and, in future, in Himself.

The process of forming a habit of faithful reasoning that has been outlined thus far, Aquinas points out, is quite simply a process of overcoming the effect of the fall—the loss of the knowledge of God and His image—by re-conforming to the image. Although he affirms that all persons are made in the image in virtue of the natural desire to 'know why', Thomas states that it is only those that have become subject to the light of grace and are forming a habit of knowing God through their natural habits of knowing that are aware of their creation in His image and are therefore preparing to encounter the reality.⁸¹⁷

The discussion of the *imago dei* brings Aquinas to the end of the first part of his *Summa*. There, he established that the Triune God is the greatest good and that human beings are made in His image in virtue of a natural capacity for abstraction. He instructed his readers to re-learn to use this capacity for its intended purpose, namely, to see God in all things. Put differently, he explained how to conform to the image of God. In the process of conforming, illumination had a key role to play, for it is by cultivating the skill of viewing things in the light of faith that the natural light of reason is progressively readied for the sight of the light of glory.

The second part of the *Summa* covers the topics of moral order and Christian virtue, serving to indicate that the illumination of the intellect that is enabled in part one is not the terminus of Thomas' line of inquiry. For Aquinas, rather, the goal of a transformed mind is a transformed life. Only when thoughts *and* behaviours are consistent with professed beliefs does one become fully conformed to the image of God and therefore *living proof* for His existence. Unless such proof is provided by one who is also able to give an account of the Triune, Incarnate God that is proved,

⁸¹⁶ Ibid.

⁸¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 13, trans. Hill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.93.4.

there is no recourse to demonstrating the existence of a Triune God in a world where all do not profess faith in Him.

In the desire to produce readers capable of providing living proof for the Triune God, Aquinas spells out in his second part the life changes that should occur in the one whose mind has been transformed along the lines of part one.⁸¹⁸ At the turn of the second part to the third, Jordan notes, Aquinas reminds that any life change has occurred under the impetus of faith in Christ who illumined the Triune nature of God so that His people might do likewise.⁸¹⁹

Aquinas the Augustinian

Thomas Aquinas has been said to abandon the Augustinian tradition for the Aristotelian one. More specifically, it has been claimed that he rejects Augustine's illumination theory and Anselm's argument. In this chapter, I have shown that such claims only obtain where Aquinas is assigned certain views past interpreters needed him to hold in order to invoke his authority in pushing their own agendas. This 'rewritten theology' of Aquinas has had opponents as well as proponents. On the assumption that Thomas did in fact present pre-theological theistic proofs as many of his Neo-Thomist readers insisted, some have accused Aquinas of separating the project of explaining and proving the nature and existence of God from real life in Christ. This is the same charge that has been levelled against Augustine, because of his psychological analogies and Anselm, because of his argument.

Just the opposite of what is frequently affirmed is true of all three authors, however. Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, with the analogies, the argument, and the five ways, respectively, provide resources for conforming to the image of the Triune God, as they commonly understand God. In this, they tie reflection on God's nature and daily Christian living together.⁸²⁰ They conceptually carry their readers

⁸¹⁸ Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 67; Mark Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 136-53; Aquinas, *ST*, vol. 31, trans. O'Brien (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2.2.2.2. According to Kerr and Jordan, the whole *Summa* and especially its proofs culminate in the second part, particularly in the Aquinas' distinction between believing God and believing *unto* God, which underscores the difference between having faith and having an effective faith.

⁸¹⁹ Mark D. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 120.

⁸²⁰ Gilles Emery O.P., "Trinitarian Theology as Spiritual Exercise in Augustine and Aquinas," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 1-40.

from the beginning to the end of the process of conforming to God's image, which is a process of increasing illumination.

Inasmuch as it is an inquiry which both articulates an Augustinian Trinitarian doctrine and explains how to be intellectually and practically transformed by it through faith in Christ, Aquinas' *Summa* falls in a genre of theological-pedagogical literature together with Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Anselm's *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. In that treatise, Thomas perpetuates the tradition of Augustine, not merely for its own sake, but because he felt compelled as his forebears had to help the group of intellectually gifted believers in his care bring their faith to bear on their everyday endeavours and by means of those endeavours bear witness to the faith.

In composing a treatise for such an audience, Aquinas imitated Augustine and Anselm in the sense that he allowed their shared understanding of the revelation of God in Christ to direct his efforts to appropriate the philosophical resources popular at the time for the purpose of writing a guide for conforming to God's image. Although he employed new forms of argumentation, this is exactly the reason why he was able to affirm in a fresh and relevant way the meaning of Augustine's claim that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge.

VI. DIVINE ILLUMINATION IN DECLINE

(1274 – c. 1300)

Introduction

The passing away of both Bonaventure and Aquinas in 1274 marked the start of a new phase in the history of divine illumination theory: the period of its decline. In this chapter, I explain why Franciscan thinkers working in the last quarter of the thirteenth century began to reconsider the illumination account and eventually abandoned it. While there were many that challenged illumination theory in one way or another during this period, I limit the present discussion to three thinkers that played very different but key roles in the decline of illumination theory: Peter John Olivi, Henry of Ghent, and John Duns Scotus.⁸²¹ I elucidate the account of knowledge and illumination each thinker gives. In the case of Henry and Scotus, I will also elaborate the way the knowledge of God is construed.

The discussion of illumination and related issues in the thought of these three thinkers will confirm that the illumination account against which late thirteenth-century Franciscans reacted was not that of Augustine but Bonaventure. However, it will also reveal that Franciscans after Bonaventure did not question the authority of the Seraphic Doctor in questioning the viability of his illumination account so much as they sought to eliminate inconsistencies from his Franciscan definition of knowledge and in this spell out the logical corollaries of that definition. Towards the end of the chapter, the explanation of all these issues will put me in a position to assess the other two studies of the late thirteenth-century decline of the illumination account and to give a preliminary analysis of the relationship between late Medieval Franciscan and modern thought.

⁸²¹ See Patrick James Doyle, “The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory,” and Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*.

KNOWLEDGE & DIVINE ILLUMINATION

Peter John Olivi was likely the first Franciscan figure to raise problems for illumination theory.⁸²² On this and other matters, Olivi did not hesitate to cause controversy within the order. In the 1260's, he studied at the Franciscan school in Paris, where he almost certainly sat under Bonaventure's teaching, before he moved on to serve as a lector in southern France.⁸²³ It was during his time as lector that Olivi became notorious for his outspoken stance on religious issues, above all, poverty. As the chief of the 'spiritual' contingent, Olivi greatly opposed the mainstream academic members of the order.⁸²⁴ In 1283, his works were censured by Franciscan authorities.

Although Olivi was reprimanded for espousing unorthodox theological and philosophical views, recent research has shown that the primary motivation for condemning him on intellectual grounds was to discredit the spiritual stance on poverty.⁸²⁵ If Olivi had not been the champion of the spiritual movement, his "speculative opinions would hardly have attracted much attention."⁸²⁶ This is especially true since his arguments disclose nothing but the deepest commitment to St. Francis.⁸²⁷ Olivi's expressed intention was to promulgate the Franciscan principles Bonaventure codified and spell out their logical implications, even if he did this with a degree exuberance that unsettled colleagues.⁸²⁸

Among the reasons cited for his condemnation was his oblique rejection of illumination theory.⁸²⁹ Although the points he raised were controversial in the moment, many of his Franciscan colleagues and examiners, most notably his student

⁸²² Etienne Gilson, *History*, 344.

⁸²³ David Burr, *The Persecution of Peter Olivi* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1967), 6.

⁸²⁴ See David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the 'Usus Pauper' Controversy*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

⁸²⁵ David Burr, *The Persecution of Peter Olivi*, 40.

⁸²⁶ Carter Partee, "Peter John Olivi: Historical and Doctrinal Study," *Franciscan Studies* 20 (1960): 218.

⁸²⁷ David Burr, *The Persecution of Peter Olivi*, 19.

⁸²⁸ See Carter Partee, "Peter John Olivi," 220; David Flood, "Recent Study on Peter Olivi," *Franciscan Studies* 58 (2000): 111.

Peter of Trabes and his inquisitor Richard of Middleton, quickly came to see that his criticisms were not unfounded.⁸³⁰ By the time Duns Scotus reached the height of his career approximately fifteen years later, intervening figures like these had already made illumination a moot point. Scotus merely placed the final stamp of approval on a thesis Olivi originally advanced.⁸³¹

Olivi presents his arguments against illumination when he inquires ‘whether or not the eternal reasons are the principle of understanding all things’ and ‘whether or not God irradiates in the intellect whenever it understands’.⁸³² He starts by summarizing the claim Bonaventure made to support his illumination theory: whatever is eternal and immutable and infallible is God, and whatever truth humans know with certitude must be eternal and immutable and infallible; therefore, the divine light must be that by which human beings attain true and certain knowledge.⁸³³

There are two major problems Olivi sees as implicit in this illumination account. Both problems unfold from the view that the eternal reasons are innately impressed on the mind through illumination. Inasmuch as these reasons are one with the very essence of God and immediately join the mind to God, Olivi insists they are bound to give the human being recourse to the direct vision of the thoughts of God and therefore God Himself. For this reason, he concludes that illumination theory is prone to the error of ontologism.⁸³⁴

The other problem concerns the role the eternal reasons play in supervising natural acts of knowing, for the sake of ensuring that ideas produced are absolutely

⁸²⁹ See S. Piron, “La liberté divine et la destruction des idées chez Olivi,” in *Pierre de Jean Olivi (1248-1298): Pensée scolastique, dissidence spirituelle et société* (Paris: Vrin, 1998), 71-89.

⁸³⁰ See Patrick James Doyle’s, “The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory”; Antonio di Noto, O.F.M., *La Théologie Naturelle de Pierre de Trabibus*, O.F.M. (Padua: CEDAM, 1963); Edgar Hocedez, S.J., *Richard de Middleton: sa vie, ses oeuvres, sa doctrine* (Paris: Edouard Champion, 1925).

⁸³¹ See C. Berube, “Olivi, critique de Bonaventure et d’Henri de Gand,” in *Studies Honoring Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1976), 57-121; Etienne Gilson, *History*, 350.

⁸³² Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, 3 vols., ed. Bernard Jansen, S.J. (Quaracchi: Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, 1926), vol. 3, 500-13; for other summaries of Olivi’s thoughts on illumination, see Patrick James Doyle, “The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory,” 63-5; Etienne Gilson, *History*, 692-3.

⁸³³ Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones*, 502.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-507.

true and certain. Even though Bonaventure did not think that natural human cognitive activity gives rise to the knowledge of the supernatural or is wholly accomplished by the supernatural, he did define the act of cognition as a shared effort on the part of human and divine beings. Grace is needed to perfect nature, in Bonaventure's view, because nature is not adequate as it stands.

The interference of the supernatural in the natural which Bonaventure welcomed is precisely what Olivi finds problematic. So long as cognition occupies an ambiguous space between the natural and the supernatural, Olivi thinks it cannot help but be regarded as what some have called a 'zero-sum game' in which God and human persons compete for the same responsibilities or domain.⁸³⁵ If acts of knowing entail a cooperative effort or shared *concursus* on the part of human and divine beings, this implies that the mind is incompetent to know truth and achieve certitude of its own accord.⁸³⁶ If that is in fact the case, then Olivi cannot see how illumination theory can avoid leading to scepticism, the very terminus it was introduced to evade.

While Bonaventure posited the *concursus* of the innate *a priori* reasons in the effort to intimately relate the mind to God, it was precisely that overbearing interference that, ironically, rendered the divine causality in cognition repugnant to Olivi.⁸³⁷ Lest grace destroy nature, Olivi insists that illumination ought to be eliminated and the power to procure infallible knowledge be reallocated in full to the human being.⁸³⁸ Although he remains totally willing to "endorse illumination as a theological doctrine,"⁸³⁹ that is, as the source of concepts about God or help to know Him, Olivi communicates that he has serious reservations about the claim that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of *all* human knowledge.

⁸³⁵ David Burrell, *Faith and Freedom*, 171; John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle*, 95.

⁸³⁶ Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones*, 508-9.

⁸³⁷ Jacob Schmutz, "Causalité et nature pure," 226.

⁸³⁸ Ibid. See also David Burrell's *Faith and Freedom*, 115, 281, 485. On the difficulties involved in relating the natural to the supernatural in a *concursus* model, of which Franciscans became aware around the time of Olivi, see John Lynch, *The Theory of Knowledge of Vital du Four* (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1972), 153; Etienne Gilson, *History*, 343-4.

⁸³⁹ John Marschall, "The Causation of Knowledge in the Philosophy of Peter John Olivi, O.F.M." *Franciscan Studies* 16 (1956): 314.

Despite his reservations, Olivi states that he gives credence to illumination theory, simply because wise men like Bonaventure had advanced it.⁸⁴⁰ He claims that he only mentions the theory's fatal flaws so that his followers can deal with them. He urges his readers to promptly devise ways to eliminate the errors inherent in the illumination account, since it is a 'very dangerous' theory of knowledge as it stands.

Even though he questions the viability of illumination, Olivi's writings on natural cognition reveal that he thinks the nature of knowledge itself after the manner of Bonaventure. Like his Seraphic predecessor, Olivi understands knowledge as a one-to-one correspondence or the "actual, immediate expression of an object."⁸⁴¹ On the basis of that assumption, Olivi, who had already implicitly rejected the idea that the eternal reasons mediate between the mind and reality, radically challenges the notion that a mediating species is necessary for knowledge at all. If knowledge is immediate, he argues, the mind that requires a species will never see reality but only the species.⁸⁴² On those grounds, he rejects the species and thus advances what may be the first form of direct realism.⁸⁴³

Although Olivi attributes to human beings all the powers that are required to perform immediate acts of knowing indefectibly in his implicit rejection of illumination, he never denies the relevance of faith for reason. To the contrary, he states that the grace that is received through faith, which only arises from a will to love God, opens access to the infallible powers of reason, even though it does not interfere with the use of reason itself. This view grounds his wholesale rejection of pagan philosophy and the *sacra doctrina* of Thomas Aquinas.⁸⁴⁴

⁸⁴⁰ Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones*, 512-13.

⁸⁴¹ John Marschall, "The Causation of Knowledge in the Philosophy of Peter John Olivi, O.F.M.," 313.

⁸⁴² Olivi's critique of species theory can be found in his *Quaestiones*, vol. 2, 467-70 & vol. 3, 123.

⁸⁴³ This is the argument of Robert Pasnau, who discusses the origins of a direct realist epistemology in the thought of Olivi and later William of Ockham in his, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 21-2.

⁸⁴⁴ See David Burr, "Petrus Ionnis Olivi and the Philosophers," *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971): 41-71, esp. 66.

Henry of Ghent (1217-1293)

KNOWLEDGE & DIVINE ILLUMINATION

Olivi's contemporary Henry of Ghent was one of the most influential intellectuals at the University of Paris in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. Although he was not officially associated with a religious order, Henry was one of the foremost spokesmen on behalf of the Franciscan cause. When he recast the illumination account in his *Summa quaestionum ordinarium*, he sought to clear it of charges such as Olivi had raised.⁸⁴⁵

The first question Henry asks in his *Summa* is whether it is possible to know anything at all. This is significant, inasmuch as it signals a departure from the methods of earlier Summists. While these had begun their works with questions on God's nature, Henry only turns to pursue this line of inquiry once he has investigated issues pertaining to the possibility and nature of knowledge. As I will soon show, Henry took this approach in an effort to intellectually out-manoeuvre Aquinas and to discredit the account of knowledge by negation the latter's *Summa* outlined. After Henry, it became common for Franciscans to open their major theological works with the question whether knowledge is possible.

When he addresses this question himself, the Solemn Doctor considers the closely related and by his time controversial question 'whether it is possible for a human being to know something without divine illumination'.⁸⁴⁶ In answering it, he makes a pro-Franciscan attempt to confirm that illumination does in fact concur in ordinary cognition, even while showing that does not err in the two ways Olivi mentioned. To accomplish this, Henry introduces a new distinction between what he

⁸⁴⁵ Other summaries of Henry's thought on illumination are given by Robert Pasnau, "Henry of Ghent and the Twilight of Divine Illumination," *Review of Metaphysics* 49:1 (1995): 49-75; and Stephen Marrone, *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academia of America Press, 1985).

⁸⁴⁶ Henry of Ghent, *Summa (Quaestiones Ordinariae)*, art. 1-5, in *Henrici de Gandavo Opera Omnia*, ed. G.A. Wilson (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001). Article one, questions one and two of Henry's *Summa* have been translated by Robert Pasnau in, *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts*, vol. 3: *Mind and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); all five questions of article one have been translated by Roland J. Teske in *Henry of Ghent's Summa of Ordinary Questions (Article One): The Possibility of Human Knowledge* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2008).

calls ‘purely natural’ knowledge and supernatural or ‘special’ divine illumination.⁸⁴⁷ He notes that some objects of knowledge can never “be apprehended by purely natural means but only by a special divine illumination, for example, those that are essentially and unqualifiedly matters of faith.”⁸⁴⁸

By contrast to supernatural objects, Henry insists that natural objects can in fact be known purely naturally. Although Henry is willing to allow that the First Knower exerts a general influence on the knower by bestowing the natural capacity, he emphatically denies that God concurs with the human mind in the process of cognition. In other words, he concludes that the mind does not need the illumination of the eternal reasons in order to abstract, as Bonaventure had defined abstraction. In affirming this, Henry dispels all hints of ontologism and avoids taking “much away from the dignity and perfection of the created intellect.”⁸⁴⁹ In short, he puts Olivi’s allegations to rest.

Although he denies that illumination enters into the process of cognition, Henry does not reject it altogether. He acknowledges that his Franciscan predecessors and Augustine had insisted on the indispensability of the divine light and thus proceeds to explain what they meant when they did this. Towards that end, the Solemn Doctor introduces yet another distinction between two ways of knowing any object. He admits that his treatment of these two ways borrows much from Avicenna, whose thought was garnering a great deal of interest amongst late thirteenth-century Franciscan scholars.⁸⁵⁰ This Franciscan ‘return’ to Avicenna was apparently part of a greater effort to prove the traditional Augustinianism of the Franciscan outlook and to distinguish Franciscan thought from the Averroist and

⁸⁴⁷ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Robert Pasnau, 1.2.2.B.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid. See Steven Marrone’s, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 2, 270.

⁸⁵⁰ Jules Janssens, “Henry of Ghent and Avicenna” in *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, ed. Gordon Wilson (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming in 2009); idem., “Elements of Avicennian Metaphysics in the *Summa*,” in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 41-60; idem., “Some Elements of Avicennian Influence on Henry of Ghent’s Psychology,” in *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of His Death (1293)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 155-67; Jerome V. Brown, “Henry’s Theory of Knowledge: Henry of Ghent on Avicenna and Augustine,” in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought*, 19-42; Roland Teske, “Some Aspects of Henry of Ghent’s Debt to Avicenna’s Metaphysics,” *The Modern Schoolman* 85 (2007): 51-70; Etienne Gilson, “Avicenna et le point de départ de Duns Scot,” *Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen-Age* 2 (1927): 89-149.

Aristotelian articles that had been condemned in the 1270's.

In the first way of cognition Henry mentions, the intellect abstracts a created reason or exemplar.⁸⁵¹ In the process, it grasps the first principle of Being and its transcendental determinations, one, true, good, as they are manifested in the exemplar.⁸⁵² In the second way, the intellect abstracts 'backwards' from the exemplar it previously constructed to something in the created order it now seeks to comprehend. The difference between the two ways of knowing is the difference between a cognitive move from a sensible particular to an intelligible universal or from an intelligible universal to a sensible particular.

When the mind works in the first way, Henry states that it knows what is *true* (*verum*) in that object. It simply apprehends the thing as it is and has the thing as the direct object of knowledge (*objectum cognitum*). When the mind works in the second way, employing the exemplar as the basis for cognizing other things (*ratio cognoscendi*), it engages in a complex mode of cognition in which it determines the correspondence between objects and exemplars in the mind, so as to determine the essential *truth* (*veritas*) of objects.⁸⁵³ In summary, Henry's view is that there is a two-fold knowledge of truth: the true knowledge that comes from simply grasping that a being exists, and the knowledge of truth the mind enjoys when it employs the concept of an object it has grasped in order to understand other things. In emphasizing the indispensability of exemplars for the true and truthful comprehension of the natural order, Henry insists he perfectly marries the insights of Plato and Aristotle, as Bonaventure and Augustine had done.⁸⁵⁴

Though Henry allows that the knowledge of the true and the truth are attainable by purely natural means, he goes on to argue that the only way to achieve infallible cognitive certitude about the truth or 'whatness' (*quidditas*) of a thing is

⁸⁵¹ See J.V. Brown, "Abstraction and the Object of the Human Intellect according to Henry of Ghent." *Vivarium* 11:1 (1973): 80-104.

⁸⁵² Jan A. Aertsen, "Transcendental Thought in Henry of Ghent," in *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings*, 1-18.

⁸⁵³ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Robert Pasnau, 1.2.2.E; on Henry's correspondence theory of and Avicenna's influence upon his thought in this regard, see Katherine H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 32; and Steven Marrone's *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 2, 362.

⁸⁵⁴ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Robert Pasnau, 1.2.2.F.

through special divine illumination.⁸⁵⁵ This is the case because the purely naturally known exemplar is abstracted on the basis of mutable sense objects, and invoking Plato and Augustine, Henry insists like a typical dualist that ‘pure truth’ (*sincera veritas*) cannot be acquired from the senses.⁸⁵⁶

Not only do the objects of knowledge change but the mind does as well. For this reason, Henry infers that purely naturally formed ideas are bound to be “incomplete, obscure, and foggy.”⁸⁵⁷ Because the objects of knowledge and the knower are mutable, Henry concludes with Bonaventure that, “certain, infallible, and pure knowledge of the truth,”⁸⁵⁸ or wisdom, cannot be achieved on the basis of a human exemplar but only on the grounds of a divine one.⁸⁵⁹

The Solemn Doctor proceeds to differentiate between two kinds of exemplar. The first is the kind the human mind creates on the basis of experience. The second is an uncreated one that subsists in the divine mind. Since the divine exemplars are the ideal patterns after which all things are made, Henry reasons that the truth of anything that has been made in accordance with an exemplar is known most perfectly in its uncreated exemplar.

To avoid the ontologist insinuations of this claim, Henry revisits his distinction between the two ways of utilizing any exemplar in cognition, namely, as the object of knowledge (*objectum cognitum*) or as the means of knowing (*ratio cognoscendi*). He argues that the divine exemplars are only understood in the second sense in the present life, even though they will be known in the first way in the state of beatitude. According to Henry, the divine exemplars of Being, unity, truth, and goodness are imprinted or poured upon the mind through special illumination. These uncreated exemplars ‘check’ the truth of the exemplars that have been created by the mind and thus confirm that they are absolutely certain.⁸⁶⁰

In summary, Henry holds that the mind can apprehend that an object is true as

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., 1.2.2.E.

⁸⁵⁶ See Augustine, *div. qu.* 46.

⁸⁵⁷ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Robert Pasnau, 1.2.2.G.

⁸⁵⁸ Ibid., 1.2.2.K.

⁸⁵⁹ Andreas Speer, “Certitude and Wisdom in Bonaventure and Henry of Ghent,” in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought*, 75-100.

⁸⁶⁰ Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Robert Pasnau, 1.2.2.L.

well as its truth by purely natural means, that is, by abstracting a created exemplar from sense objects, *a posteriori*. To know *pure* truth with infallible certitude, however, the mind must cognize its objects by attending from an *a priori* divine exemplar to an empirical instance of the exemplar, which is something that must be made possible by the special divine illumination of uncreated exemplars.⁸⁶¹

Although knowledge by illumination does not necessarily alter the content of the idea the mind produces of its own accord, it is required to stabilize the ground on which the idea rests.

By presenting distinctions between purely natural and special knowledge, two kinds of truth, and two kinds of exemplar, Henry found a complex way to say that the illumination received through the eternal reasons does not concur in the process of cognition as Bonaventure supposed but only acts as the final guarantor of cognitive certitude. In doing this, he sought to give an account of knowledge and illumination recognizably consistent with Bonaventure's, yet which was not given to ontologism and did not threaten to undermine the autonomy of the intellect. Once he had formulated it, he could honestly say with the Seraphic Doctor that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all *certain* knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Henry's views on the knowledge of God are closely related to his account of natural or ordinary knowledge and the role of illumination in it.⁸⁶² In fact, natural knowledge by illumination as he understands it turns out to be convertible with the knowledge of God.⁸⁶³ When illumination pours eternal reasons into the mind in order to afford absolutely certain knowledge of beings, Henry writes, it

⁸⁶¹ Ibid., 1.2.2.F.

⁸⁶² Relevant articles on Henry's arguments concerning the knowability of God include: Roland J. Teske, "Henry of Ghent's Criticism of the Aristotelian Arguments for God's Existence," 83-99 *The Modern Schoolman* 82 (2005): 101-9; idem., "Henry of Ghent's Metaphysical Argument for the Existence of God," *Modern Schoolman* 83:1 (2005): 19-38; Anton C. Pegis, "Toward a New Way to God: Henry of Ghent," *Mediaeval Studies* 30 (1968): 226-47; idem., "A New Way to God: Henry of Ghent (II)," *Mediaeval Studies* 31 (1969), 93-116; idem., "Henry of Ghent and the New Way to God (III)," *Mediaeval Studies* 33 (1971), 158-79.

⁸⁶³ The following exposition of Henry's arguments on the knowability of God's existence is based on articles 21-24 of *Henry of Ghent's Summa: The Questions on God's Existence and Essence*, ed. Jos Decorte and Roland J. Teske (Leuven: Peeters, 2005). The articles on the knowability of God's existence include 22.1-6; the articles on the knowability of God's essence include 23.1-2 & 24.1-9.

simultaneously fosters knowledge of beings as they reflect an idea of God. Because they are exactly patterned after the divine ideas that *are* God, beings directly even if finitely reveal something of the divine Being, as per the univocal concept of being Henry basically presupposes.⁸⁶⁴

Although Henry admits that the infinite Being is unknowable in Himself owing to the gap that separates the finite from the infinite, he nonetheless insists that the existence of that Being is grasped each time an illumined mind grasps the existence of any finite being. From an illumined perspective, the existence of finite beings assumes the existence of an infinite Being who is the sum total of all actually and possibly existing finite beings.⁸⁶⁵ For this reason, it is not possible to fail to infer from creatures that God exists.

Since every being's essence is a direct representation of some finite facet of the divine essence, moreover, Henry indicates that illumined knowledge of what a creature is simultaneously provides positive knowledge of something that God is. Whatever is understood about the existence and essence of a creature, in summary, confirms something about the existence and essence of God in virtue of the univocal relation of beings to Being. According to Henry, it is only because God's existence and essence can be fully grasped by finite means in the present that He can be ultimately known in the fullness of His infinitude.⁸⁶⁶

Though the knowledge of God Henry describes is occasioned by the knowledge of creatures, Henry stresses that it originates in what is proper to the illumined mind, or in the eternal reasons. For Henry as for Bonaventure and Avicenna, the *a posteriori* or cosmological proof for God's existence follows from the proof that is *a priori* or ontological. Conversely, the plausibility of the

⁸⁶⁴ On Henry's basically univocal concept of being, see Stephen Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus," in *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Marenbon (London: Routledge, 2003), 297; Etienne Gilson, *History*, 448; Steven Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 2, 317-19; Henry of Ghent's *Summa: The Questions on God's Existence and Essence*, 21.2

⁸⁶⁵ Franciscans developed a 'positive' idea of divine infinity which becomes especially noticeable in the work of Henry of Ghent, according to Etienne Gilson in his *History*, 449; and Roberto Levano, "Divine Ideas and Infinity," in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought*, 177-97. This idea is to be contrasted with the 'negative' concept of infinity that was assumed by ancient and earlier Medieval thinkers. See Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition from Plato to Eriugena* (Louvain: Eerdmans, 1995); and Leo Sweeney, *Divine Infinity in Greek and Medieval Thought* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

cosmological proofs is guaranteed by the ontological one. Because the latter does not depend upon the senses but on what comes to the intellect from above, Henry claims that it can achieve infallible certitude and that it therefore provides the ‘most perfect’ basis for proving God’s existence from creatures.⁸⁶⁷

In the twenty-first article of his *Summa*, Henry indicates that the discussion of God’s existence and essence he is about to undertake is the most important in the whole work. Yet he also affirms that the preceding articles on the possibility and nature of knowledge laid a foundation for the present line of inquiry which was essential. In the preliminary questions on knowledge and illumination, Henry had attempted to prove the impossibility of attaining absolutely certain knowledge of empirical reality without recourse to the *a priori* eternal reasons that come from above. Establishing that at the outset allowed him to affirm in his questions on the knowability of God’s existence and essence that the same holds true in the case of the knowledge of God: that it is not possible to know anything, much less God, unless one identifies the intuition of Being as the precondition of abstraction on the basis of beings.

By structuring his *Summa* as he did and arguing along these lines, Henry implicitly undermined the plausibility of Aquinas’ account of natural knowledge as well as his five ways to prove the existence and essence of God. Aquinas’ had not discussed knowledge on the assumption that the mind enjoys a preliminary intuition of Being, much less God’s Being. In fact, he had emphatically denied that the mind attains that intuition short of the beatific vision. For him, one can only anticipate the experience of intuiting God in knowing by negation.

In giving the definitive statement of Franciscan proofs for God’s existence, as Henry believes he does, the Solemn Doctor suggests that knowledge of God as Thomas understands it is not only inferior to the type of knowledge his account promises to give; he also implies that it is impossible to hold such knowledge with any certainty. The theory of knowledge by negation is in all respects inferior by comparison to the Franciscan theory, which allows positive even if finite knowledge

⁸⁶⁶ See *Henry of Ghent’s Summa*, 24.3-6.

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.4.

to be obtained indubitably.⁸⁶⁸ The latter is the theory Henry claims can be found in the writings of Augustine, Anselm, and Avicenna.

By Henry's time, an attitude of opposition towards Aquinas had become pervasive amongst Franciscans. Towards the end of Bonaventure's life, Franciscans had already begun to grow uneasy about Aquinas' work. In particular, they regarded his doctrine of double truth as a threat to their outlook and to the Christian faith more generally. After Aquinas' death, it would seem that Franciscans began campaigning against him.⁸⁶⁹ Historical records indicate that some important 'doctors of Sacred Scripture' in Paris began to complain to the Pope that erroneous ideas were being taught in the university.⁸⁷⁰ In response, the Pope asked Etienne Tempier, the Bishop of Paris and a great Franciscan sympathizer, to investigate the situation. Although the Pope had merely requested a preliminary investigation, Tempier almost immediately issued the condemnation of 1277 on his own authority, without consulting the Holy Father, although there is no evidence that the Pope frowned upon this decision.

Recent research has shown that Aquinas was strongly implicated in some of the 219 articles that were condemned and that the condemnation may even have been an attempt to invalidate his system.⁸⁷¹ It is likely that Tempier and his advisors had already drawn up a list of articles to condemn when the Pope sent his request. When he finally reported the condemnation to the Pope, Tempier wrote that he had sought the advice of those aforementioned 'doctors of Sacred Scripture', most likely Franciscans, and especially that of Henry of Ghent, when he was drafting the condemnation.⁸⁷² Although Aquinas' reputation would eventually be cleared by papal decree in 1325, Franciscans had the chance in the meantime to make many trend-setting intellectual moves.⁸⁷³ Because of his implicit and explicit efforts to undermine the authority of Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent deserves much of the

⁸⁶⁸ Stephen Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus," 303.

⁸⁶⁹ Etienne Gilson, *History*, 410.

⁸⁷⁰ This account of the circumstances surrounding the condemnation of 1277 is drawn from John F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and the Condemnation of 1277," *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 233-72.

⁸⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷² R. Wielockx, "Henry of Ghent and the Events of 1277," in *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, ed. Gordon Wilson (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming in 2009).

credit for creating this opportunity.⁸⁷⁴

John Duns Scotus (1265/66-1308)

KNOWLEDGE & DIVINE ILLUMINATION

John Duns Scotus was the Franciscan scholar that eliminated illumination from ordinary cognition once and for all. The exposition of Scotus' arguments against illumination I offer here is based on the text of his mature work, the *Ordinatio*.⁸⁷⁵ Like his teacher William of Ware, the Subtle Doctor frames his objections to illumination as a response to Henry of Ghent.⁸⁷⁶ Hence, he begins his article on illumination with a summary of Henry's account.⁸⁷⁷ Henry had argued that the uncreated exemplars received through illumination are essential for certitude because the objects that serve as the basis for the construction of a created exemplar are mutable, as is the knowing subject in which the exemplar inheres.

Scotus' strategy for invalidating Henry's arguments for illumination involves demonstrating that the objects known and the knower are not in fact mutable. In his opinion, the objects of knowledge must be inherently intelligible and the mind naturally equipped to perceive intelligibility if certitude is to be obtainable at all. So long as Henry posits the concurrence of the divine light in any aspect of human

⁸⁷³ John F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and the Condemnation of 1277," 239.

⁸⁷⁴ Stephen Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus," 296.

⁸⁷⁵ Scotus produced several versions of this text. The earliest is the *Lectura Oxoniensis*, from which he taught at Oxford from around 1297 to 1301. A second, revised draft of his *Lectura* is known as the *Reportata Parisiensa*, which was delivered at Paris. The *Ordinatio* is the final version, which is also known as Scotus' *Opus oxoniense*. His question on illumination in the early *Lectura* can be found in *Lectura in librum primum Sententiarum*, vol. 16 (Vatican, 1960), 1.3.1.3. The *Ordinatio* text can be found in Scotus' *Opera omnia* (Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950), vol. 3, 1.3.1.4 (pp. 123-72). This section has been translated by Allan Wolter, O.F.M. under the title, "Concerning Human Knowledge," in *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).

⁸⁷⁶ See Jerome V. Brown, "John Duns Scotus on Henry of Ghent's Arguments for Divine Illumination: The Statement of the Case," *Vivarium* 13: 2 (1976): 94-112; idem., "John Duns Scotus on Henry of Ghent's Theory of Knowledge," *The Modern Schoolman* 56 (1978); idem., "Duns Scotus on the Possibility of Knowing Genuine Truth: The Reply to Henry of Ghent in the *Lectura Prima* and in the *Ordinatio*," *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 51 (1984): 136-82; Steven P. Marrone, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus on the Knowledge of Being," *Speculum* 63:1 (1988): 22-57.

⁸⁷⁷ On William of Ware, see chapter five of Doyle's *The Disintegration of Divine Illumination* and an edition of Ware's question on illumination in Augustinus Daniels, "Wilhelm von Ware über das Menschliche Erkennen," in *Zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters Supplementband I & 2* (Muenster: Aschendorfsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913), qu. 18.

cognition whatsoever, he cannot truly affirm that the mind is competent to certainly know.⁸⁷⁸ For this reason, the Solemn Doctor invites scepticism with respect to the possibility of knowledge.

The arguments Scotus presents to prove the immutability of the objects known and the infallibility of the knower turn on the univocal concept of being he elucidates elsewhere.⁸⁷⁹ According to this concept, created beings exist finitely and materially, as the divine being exists infinitely and immaterially, that is, immutably.⁸⁸⁰ For this reason, thoughts and words can apply to created and divine beings in exactly the same sense. In the question on illumination itself, the Subtle Doctor interprets Augustine's illumination *as* his own theory of the univocity of being.⁸⁸¹ On his account, the divine light permeates created reality in a general sense, inasmuch as it causes beings to exist in an immutable mode of being. Through the divine light, creatures become manifestly knowable.⁸⁸² What is known of them is known of God.

Once he has recast Augustinian illumination along these lines, Scotus proceeds to argue that the human mind is intrinsically stable by appealing to its primary or intuitive knowledge of being.⁸⁸³ The key and characteristically subtle move he makes in this regard is to construe the intuition of being and the transcendentals which earlier Franciscan thinkers had contended comes through illumination as an entirely natural feature of the mind. In arguing this, the Subtle Doctor collapses the Solemn Doctor's supernatural way of knowing into the natural power to know. He altogether eliminates the divine *concursus* in ordinary cognition.

For Scotus, the intuition of being performs much the same function it had in the thought of Bonaventure and Henry. As opposed to a distinct type of knowledge

⁸⁷⁸ John Duns Scotus, "Concerning Human Knowledge," 104.

⁸⁷⁹ See Scotus' *Opera omnia*, vol. 4, *Ordinatio* 1.8.3 (pp. 205-7); translated by Wolter under the title "Concerning Metaphysics" in *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings*, 1-12; other sections from Scotus' metaphysical writings are included in, William A. Frank & Allan B. Wolter, eds., *Duns Scotus, Metaphysician* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1995).

⁸⁸⁰ Although Scotus upheld the doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms, which allowed for change even where forms were defined in a 'fixed' sense, it is worth mentioning that the doctrine was declared unsound in 1311, even though the concept of beings as fixed remained. See Etienne Gilson, *History*, 344.

⁸⁸¹ John Duns Scotus, "Concerning Human Knowledge," 115.

⁸⁸² *Ibid.*, 123.

⁸⁸³ See Basil Heiser, O.F.M., "The *Primum Cognitum* According to Duns Scotus," *Franciscan Studies* 23:2 (1942): 193-216.

or conceptual content per se, it represents a built-in intellectual capacity to check the truth and certitude of the ideas the mind generates in abstraction.⁸⁸⁴ Naturally, Scotus understands abstraction in the Avicennian-Franciscan sense as the act in which the intellect derives from a phantasm or sense species the knowledge of its unchanging essence or quiddity, namely, an intelligible species.⁸⁸⁵

Although Scotus believes the abstractive faculties are competent to infer an intelligible species from a sense species, he does not think they can at once account for their own ability to obtain perfect and complete, that is, immediate, knowledge of a reality. For Scotus, this is exactly the responsibility of intuitive cognition, which guarantees the veracity and certitude of abstract concepts and therefore saves abstractive knowledge from scepticism.⁸⁸⁶ Because it equips the intellect to immediately grasp its objects, Scotus concludes that the intuitive capacity is what ultimately befits the mind for the immediate vision of God.⁸⁸⁷

In the question on illumination, Scotus invokes his distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition in stressing that the mind is naturally equipped to achieve certain knowledge of truth and thus to establish that there is no need for the divine concurrence in any aspect of human cognition whatsoever.⁸⁸⁸ On account of the univocal nature of being, he concludes that the objects of knowledge are stable and that their significance is therefore self-evident. Owing to the intellect's intuitive knowledge of the being that encompasses all beings, moreover, the mind is suited to immediately grasp what it knows now and eventually God. Indeed, things are structured such that the intellect cannot help but do so.

⁸⁸⁴ For Scotus' discussion of and distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition, see the relevant sections of his *Ordinatio* that have been translated by Hyman and Walsh in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Indiana: Hackett, 1983), 1.1.1.2, 2.3.2.2.

⁸⁸⁵ On Scotus' understanding of abstraction as correspondence, see Leen Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis*, 262; Katherine H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 64.

⁸⁸⁶ On Scotus' interest in establishing the fact of cognitive certitude, see Tachau's *Vision and Certitude*, 75-6.

⁸⁸⁷ See Konstantin Koser, O.F.M., "The Basic Significance of Knowledge for Christian Perfection According to Duns Scotus," *Franciscan Studies* 8 (1948): 153-72.

⁸⁸⁸ John Duns Scotus, "Concerning Human Knowledge," 121-2; Stephen D. Dumont, "Theology as a Science and Duns Scotus' Distinction between Intuitive and Abstractive Cognition," *Speculum* 64:3 (1989): 579-99.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Unlike his Franciscan and Dominican predecessors, Scotus concentrates on producing just one proof for the knowability of God's existence and essence. Although he composed numerous drafts of this proof, its basic structures remain constant.⁸⁸⁹ On the assumption that being is the first thing the mind intuitively naturally as opposed to supernaturally, as Henry had thought, Scotus elevates Henry's *a posteriori* approach to proof to the level of *a priori* perfection. Not unlike Henry, he observes that there are many different finite beings and states that it seems possible that an infinite Being exists which includes all these finite beings. On the grounds that the nature of being is univocal, such that created beings enjoy the same mode of immutable being finitely that the divine being enjoys infinitely, Scotus concludes that what is possible is also necessary. Since all people have a natural intuition of being, moreover, they can naturally see that an infinite Being must exist, simply by considering finite beings and drawing an inference to the existence of the infinite Being.⁸⁹⁰

Scotus claims his proof for God's existence is consistent with Anselm's argument, according to which the Being 'than which nothing greater can be thought' must exist in reality if it exists in thought, since God is what it is best to be, which is to exist.⁸⁹¹ Like Henry, Scotus adds that the existing beings which establish the existence of Being also reveal aspects of His essence by way of their own essences.⁸⁹² Although he admits that the quiddity of God Himself cannot be fully grasped in this life, because it is infinite, positive if limited aspects of His quiddity are understood whenever the quiddity of a creature univocally related to Him is perceived.

⁸⁸⁹ This is according to Allan B. Wolter in "The Existence and Nature of God" in *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1990), 265. A first draft of Scotus' proof appears in the *Lectura*; a second in the *Reportata Parisiensis* (a Latin-English critical edition of this version has been produced by Allan B. Wolter and Marilyn McCord Adams in "Duns Scotus' Parisian Proof for the Existence of God," *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1986): 248-321); a third, in the *Ordinatio*; see "The Existence of God," in *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings*; and a final version in the *De Primo Principio*, ed. Evan Roche (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1949).

⁸⁹⁰ John Duns Scotus, "The Existence of God," 47.

⁸⁹¹ Robert Prentice, "The *De Primo Principio* of John Duns Scotus as a Thirteenth-Century *Proslogion*," *Antonianum* 39 (1964): 77-109.

⁸⁹² John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, vol. 3, 1.3.1 or the translation of this text under the title "Man's Natural Knowledge of God," in *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings*, 13-33.

When he collapsed Henry's supernatural way of acquiring infallibly certain knowledge into the intrinsic abilities of the mind, Scotus invested the mind with a natural power to discern from creatures that God exists and to see what He is like. He formulated for the first time a truly natural theology. Even so, Scotus maintains a place for what he calls the 'supernatural' knowledge of God, or knowledge by special illumination.⁸⁹³ Supernatural knowledge is primarily knowledge that God is Triune and that He is the creative source and end of all things. Though all human agents act towards an end, Scotus notes that most have no definite idea of what the end is.⁸⁹⁴ Nor do they know what is required of them in order to reach that end.⁸⁹⁵ Human beings have no natural inclination towards the supernatural, Scotus concludes, because there is absolutely nothing supernatural about nature.⁸⁹⁶ If human beings are oriented in any sense towards the supernatural, it is only inasmuch as the one who gives the natural powers is supernatural.⁸⁹⁷

For this reason, Scotus insists that all propositional knowledge of God's nature and His status as the end of human life "must be given in a supernatural manner."⁸⁹⁸ That is to say, supernatural knowledge must be bestowed as a result of God's benevolent will to impart it; similarly, it must be received through a spontaneous response to Him on the part of the human will. For Scotus, a personal response to God is emphatically not a rational matter but a matter of the will.⁸⁹⁹ To have faith that God is Triune and that He is the goal of human life is to take a leap beyond reason.⁹⁰⁰ Although reason is abandoned in the leap the will makes in faith, Scotus does not think it is denigrated in the same instance but perfected, because it thereby attains to the love of God.

⁸⁹³ This question has been translated by Allan Wolter, O.F.M. in his article, "Duns Scotus on the Necessity of Revealed Knowledge," *Franciscan Studies* (1951): 231-72.

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 244-5.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 245-6.

⁸⁹⁶ Allan B. Wolter, "The Natural Desire for the Supernatural," in *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, 133.

⁸⁹⁷ Allan Wolter, "Duns Scotus on the Necessity of Revealed Knowledge," 259.

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁸⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 237.

Olivi, Ghent, and Scotus the Augustinians?

Peter Olivi, Henry of Ghent, and John Duns Scotus all claimed to accurately represent the meaning of Augustine's views on illumination in presenting their own.⁹⁰¹ With the exception of Scotus, they are often believed. Challenging this belief, I have shown that Scotus responds to Henry who responds to Olivi who works with Bonaventure's theory of knowledge by divine illumination in mind. Bonaventure conceived of divine illumination as the source of eternal reasons which supervise human acts of knowing to ensure their truth and certitude. Although he had intentionally construed illumination as an extrinsic influence for the sake of accounting for the mind's intimacy with God and absolute dependence on Him, his successors quickly identified the philosophical inconsistencies in this account. To Olivi's mind, the *concursus* of illumination, when coupled with the Franciscan standard of immediate knowledge, gives way to the error of ontologism. Furthermore, it reduces cognition to a zero-sum game in which human beings effectively compete with God for the chance to perform acts which they should seemingly perform of their own accord.

Since Augustine never conceived of illumination as an extrinsic and interfering influence but as an intrinsic or empowering one, his account is not subject to the accusations that the grace of illumination undermines the integrity of nature or leads to ontologism. Because Bonaventure's was, Franciscans after him faced the challenge of promulgating his tradition of thought even while eradicating the inconsistencies in it. Henry of Ghent made an initial attempt by removing the influence of the divine light from the knowing process. In doing this, he avoided ontologism and preserved the integrity of the intellect even while maintaining an essential role for illumination in cognition as the final guarantor of certitude.

Henry's attempt to significantly reduce the concurrence of the divine light did not satisfy Scotus, who held that any concurrence whatsoever threatens the integrity of the intellect and therefore undermines the possibility of knowledge. On these grounds, Scotus eradicated illumination and proceeded to explain how human beings

are naturally competent to fulfil all the intellectual responsibilities they formerly shared with God, on account of an intuitive knowledge of Being which is not illumined but intrinsic.

In the end, Franciscan thinkers obtained an account of the human cognitive power as an intrinsic one; they got what Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas always had. Yet their understanding of the intrinsic power differed greatly from the one the three Augustinians presupposed. It was an understanding that can be traced back to Bonaventure. Even though they reconsidered or rejected his views on illumination, Olivi, Ghent, and Scotus did not question the standard of knowledge that had been set by the Seraphic Doctor. They only sought to remove philosophical inconsistencies from it. Their attempts to recast illumination in various ways were motivated by the desire to uphold the Franciscan concept of knowledge they held in common.

By affirming this, I by no means wish to imply that Olivi, Henry, Scotus and their contemporaries held exactly the same views on all matters pertaining to knowledge. This clearly was not the case. Olivi, for instance, rejects the intelligible species, while Scotus insists upon it. Bonaventure and Henry argue that the intuitive knowledge of being that makes the mind adequate to know reality comes from God, where Scotus contends that it is built into the very fabric of human nature.

Although these are admittedly differences in perspective, one can see that the spirit of Franciscan thought remains fairly constant through the changes. The intuitive knowledge of being is always considered fundamental to abstraction, no matter whether it is thought to come supernaturally or naturally. Furthermore, abstraction is consistently conceived in an originally Avicennian fashion, as the immediate knowledge of a totalized essence, whether or not the intelligible species is said to enter into it.

Such views on human knowledge originally derived from broader theological and metaphysical assumptions that were drawn from Richard of St. Victor and

⁹⁰¹ Raymond Macken, O.F.M., "Henry of Ghent and Augustine," in *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and their Medieval Readers* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 251-74; Stephen Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus," 292, 296.

Avicenna, respectively, in the attempt to articulate positions that expressed Franciscan ideals. The abandonment of illumination as Bonaventure understood it was not at once an abandonment of those ideals or the philosophical assumptions that were formed because of them. Rather, it is indicative of the Franciscans' commitment to advancing their ideals by removing internal contradictions and carrying them to their logical conclusions. The same idea of knowledge lies latent in Franciscan thought from the start to the end of the thirteenth century. Like all ideas, it simply takes time to emerge.

Scholars have a habit of sharply distinguishing between early and late thirteenth-century Franciscan schools of thought.⁹⁰² Members of the early school supposedly upheld classic Augustinian views, especially illumination, which later thinkers rejected. Bonaventure is considered the chief representative of the early school, where Scotus is described as the leader of the later school which turned in new philosophical directions. In contrast to this view, I have stressed that there is tremendous continuity of thought amongst thirteenth-century Franciscan thinkers. On my reading, Bonaventure and Duns Scotus do not present their readers with mutually exclusive systems. Rather, their work represents different phases in the gradual emergence of a philosophy that is based on Franciscan ideals and purged of internal contradictions.

From my perspective, late thirteenth-century Franciscans did not reject the early Franciscan views formulated by Bonaventure so much as they gradually settled on what Franciscans always inchoately thought, adjusting their uses of sources, terms, and arguments in the process. The fact that such adjustments were made should not lead the scholar to conclude that fundamental shifts in underlying meaning were simultaneously taking place. When the relevant texts are examined with a view to the theological source of significance, one can attend from varying forms of philosophical argumentation to shared assumptions; and if there are assumptions that have hardly changed in the whole history of the Franciscan

⁹⁰² See Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 5; Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 2; Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education* (Boston: Brill, 2000).

intellectual tradition since Bonaventure, they are assumptions about the structure of Trinitarian theology and the primacy of Christ.⁹⁰³

These conclusions bear directly on my assessment of the researches of Doyle and Marrone concerning the thirteenth-century decline of illumination theory. Doyle took the work of Etienne Gilson as the point of departure for his study of the disintegration of divine illumination theory in the thought of Peter of Trabes, Richard of Middleton, and William of Ware. Gilson had spoken of an Augustinian complex of inseparable doctrines that virtually all Franciscan thinkers espoused in the thirteenth century.⁹⁰⁴ Some of these doctrines were the plurality of substantial forms, essentialism, the convertibility of existence and essence in creatures, the formal distinction, and of course, divine illumination.

Doyle's project was to determine whether the doctrines were in fact inseparable in the thought of the figures that are the focus of his study. In other words, he set out to see whether the rejection of divine illumination entailed the rejection of the other doctrines in the complex. Doyle found that it did not and confessed that he was surprised by this discovery. Since he supposed that all the doctrines in the complex were truly Augustinian as Gilson indicated, he thought it odd that one doctrine could so suddenly be eliminated after it had been considered indispensable for centuries.

Doyle does not seem to recognize that the doctrines in Gilson's 'Augustinian' complex are not Augustinian but distinctly Franciscan and originally Avicennian. The research presented here has revealed that illumination remained a feature of Franciscan thought only so long as it helped Franciscans achieve their principal objective of articulating and advancing Franciscan ideals, and no longer. Once it became clear that illumination made it impossible to affirm the other doctrines in the Franciscan complex in a consistent manner, it had to be abandoned. From this perspective, it comes as no surprise that late thirteenth-century Franciscans such as

⁹⁰³ See Juan Carlos Flores, *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006); Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition*; Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus on God* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); idem., "Relations and the Trinity: The Case of Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 16 (2005): 1-21.

⁹⁰⁴ Etienne Gilson, *History*, 340, ff.

Peter, Richard, and William, who rejected illumination, also held fast to their other philosophical assumptions, for it was those very assumptions that rendered illumination untenable.

Marrone also takes the work of Etienne Gilson as the point of departure for his study of illumination in ten thirteenth-century thinkers. It is partially for that reason that he construes the theory of knowledge by illumination Augustine espoused as an unsystematic and mystical one. Although Marrone acknowledges that the ‘illiterate’ people of the early Middle Ages were content with such an account, its inferiority quickly became obvious once Aristotle’s works on cognition were introduced.⁹⁰⁵

In view of the threat Aristotle posed to the authority of Augustine, Marrone explains that ‘ultra-conservative’ Augustinians, most notably Bonaventure, put forth a concerted effort to systematize Augustine’s theory of knowledge. Other Augustinians such as Henry of Ghent realized the inadequacy of his attempt and proposed other possibilities. Eventually, Augustinians acknowledged the futility of their efforts. In the thought of Duns Scotus, Augustinian illumination was finally abandoned and the Aristotelian ideal of knowledge came to prevail. This is exactly the ideal which Marrone insists that modern thinkers adopted. Because such different interpretations of illumination were presented by the ten thirteenth-century Augustinians whose thought Marrone examines, the author concludes that there is no continuity of thought in the ‘Augustinian’ school. What bound thirteenth-century Augustinians together in his opinion was not shared assumptions concerning the nature knowledge, but an appreciation for the same metaphors.⁹⁰⁶

Marrone fails to recognize that there is a difference between Augustinian and Franciscan thought. He conflates the illumination accounts of Augustine and Bonaventure, and he does so without making any attempt to come to a resolution as to what Augustine or any other pre-thirteenth-century thinker actually meant by illumination. From my perspective, these oversights give rise to numerous problems in his account of the thirteenth-century decline of illumination theory.

⁹⁰⁵ Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 1, 11.

⁹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

In the first place, Marrone's lack of awareness of any difference between Augustinian and Franciscan thought leads him to misconstrue the place of Aristotle in thirteenth-century thought. Contrary to what Marrone supposes, the revolutionary cognitive ideal that brought about the rejection of illumination was not Aristotelian but Avicennian. That ideal did not come from outside the allegedly Augustinian tradition but from within it. It was not a genuinely Augustinian ideal but was one consistent with Franciscan ideals. Although Marrone depicts the Franciscans as conservatives, desperate to preserve a longstanding tradition, they were in fact innovators grounding a novel theory of knowledge on the authority of trusted thinkers. While that theory of knowledge is admittedly incompatible with Aristotle's, the Augustinian theory is not as Marrone believes.

For this reason, it is inaccurate to conclude as Marrone does that the decline of divine illumination theory was directly proportional to the rise of an Aristotelian cognitive ideal. The research I have presented shows that the demise of illumination was gradually brought about by the emergence of the Avicennian-Franciscan ideal from under the guise of Augustinian illumination in the hands of figures like Olivi, Ghent, and Scotus. All this escapes Marrone's notice because he does not take note of the difference between Augustinian and Franciscan thought in his treatment of thirteenth-century Augustinians, and he makes no attempt to understand what the thought of Augustine actually entails.

Marrone comes to his conclusions because he takes the usual interpretive approach of a Medieval historian and reads thirteenth-century arguments concerning illumination at face value. He fails to identify what Augustine meant by illumination or the difference between Augustine himself and thirteenth-century 'Augustinians' on illumination because he does not take into consideration that Medieval thinkers employed philosophical sources and arguments for theological reasons and assigned them theologically-determined connotations. Unfortunately, these interpretive methods cause him to misidentify the cause of the decline of divine illumination theory as well as the late Medieval sources of modern thought.

Franciscan and Modern Thought

In recent years, many scholars have begun to inquire into the late Medieval sources of modern thought, especially those that can be detected in the Franciscan intellectual tradition. Although much of the discussion centres on John Duns Scotus, it is possible to identify the structures of thought many would recognize as prototypically modern emerging as early as Bonaventure. Though this claim may come as a surprise to those that regard the Seraphic Doctor as the last representative of Medieval Augustinianism, the investigations made here have indicated that Scotus mainly made explicit what was latent in Bonaventure, in the course of eradicating the contradictions in his and similar systems.

The connection between Franciscan and modern thought has been made on both philosophical and theological levels, not to mention socio-political ones. It has been argued that Scotus effectively extracted grace from nature and created a previously unimagined realm of ‘pure nature’ when he collapsed whatever was supernatural into the natural.⁹⁰⁷ In the case of knowledge, the collapse occurred when the Subtle Doctor eliminated the extrinsic influence of illumination from account of ordinary cognition.

By eradicating Christ’s *concursus* in cognition, Scotus denied that God’s primary causality bears in any way on the secondary causation of human beings.⁹⁰⁸ While the *influentia* model allowed Augustinians to affirm that God’s primary causality is indirectly and inoffensively active in secondary causation inasmuch as it imparts the power to act as a secondary cause, the *concursus* model made causality seem like a zero-sum competition. It thus engendered a perceived need to construe divine causality as an all or nothing affair. In the effort to preserve the autonomy and integrity of the intellect, Scotus opted for nothing. He thus evacuated the supernatural from the natural and created the realm of ‘pure nature’.⁹⁰⁹

What he left when he eliminated the *concursus* was the basic concept of nature, or the natural intellectual power, which Franciscans had always presupposed.

⁹⁰⁷ See John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle*, 93-6.

⁹⁰⁸ Jacob Schmutz, “Causalité et nature pure,” 237.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 218.

On that concept, the human subject has an intrinsic and fully actualized power to cognize realities in an immediate manner, or to discern the exact correlation between thought and reality, and to do so with absolute certitude. The subject simply needs to turn to itself to see that its powers provide the perfectly adequate foundation for all knowledge.

While Bonaventure had attributed this tremendous intellectual power to the *concursus* of Christ, Scotus saw it as one that is built into the very fabric of human nature. Bonaventure's extremely self-deprecating humility thus gave rise to the opposite extreme of unjustified intellectual pride. Scotus placed so much confidence in reason, in fact, that he affirmed the possibility of giving ontological and cosmological proofs for God's existence without recourse to revelation. Since he was among the first to affirm this, Scotus can likewise be listed among the founders of the discipline of natural theology.

Although Scotus refuses the *concursus* of Christ in natural knowledge, he still allows the Son's extrinsic influence in the acquisition of the supernatural knowledge of God. In fact, he newly defines grace in an extrinsic sense.⁹¹⁰ In this sense, grace does not operate whenever the nature which is received through grace actively operates. Rather, it is passively received conceptual content concerning God, which has little to no bearing on natural operations. While knowledge of nature is a totally rational matter, in the way described above, faith in God is entirely a matter of the will to love Him. Faith, in other words, entails a leap over, against, and beyond reason.

In Scotus and already in Bonaventure, the Augustinian program of knowing God by negation was being rendered obsolete.⁹¹¹ It was being replaced by a distinctly Franciscan understanding of the knowledge of God. In Scotus, at least, it was replaced by a natural theology in which rational proofs for God's existence are given without recourse to faith, on the one hand, and, on another, a Christian faith in the Triune, Incarnate God, which is not a rational matter. Augustinians have been

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., 229.

⁹¹¹ Catherine Pickstock describes this development as the loss of 'an integrally conceptual and mystical path' in "Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance," *Modern Theology* 21:4 (Oct 2005): 548.

falsely accused of making the separation between reflection on God's existence and essence and ordinary life, especially a life of faith. However, this move appears to have been enabled in the Franciscan tradition of thought.

Such a separation was made at the same time the extremes of rationalism—or reason without faith—and fideism—or faith without reason—were being created along the lines described above, extremes which Bonaventure appears to have anticipated in giving his absolute definitions of knowledge and love. Such are the extremes which quintessentially modern thinkers assumed. By some accounts, in fact, modernity is merely the extension of this particular middle ages.⁹¹² In his *Meditations*, for example, the rationalist philosopher Descartes makes his infamous turn to the subject, espouses a representational theory of knowledge, exhibits an unprecedented occupation with certitude and scepticism, and develops his own version of the ontological proof. Around the same time, Blaise Pascal formulates his famous wager, daring his readers to take the arbitrary leap of faith.⁹¹³

There are undoubtedly affinities between late Medieval Franciscan and modern thought. At present, I can only gesture towards them, and I certainly cannot detail all that has been said both positively and negatively about the originally Franciscan ideas that had an impact on modern thinkers.⁹¹⁴ Even so, I do wish to pursue a line of inquiry in the last pages of this thesis which would make it possible to return to the above issues in the future and which anticipates by that same token an account of the relevance of this inquiry into the history of divine illumination theory for efforts to identify the sources and structures of modern epistemology, its virtues, its problems, and ways to overcome them.

⁹¹² Catherine Pickstock, "Modernity and Scholasticism: A Critique of Recent Invocations of Univocity," *Antonianum* 78 (2003): 33.

⁹¹³ Etienne Gilson notes the relation between Franciscan thought and that of Descartes and Pascal in *History*, 48, 174, 459, 650.

⁹¹⁴ Criticisms of Scotus have come from those with 'Radically Orthodox' sensibilities. See Catherine Pickstock, "Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance," 543-74; idem., "Modernity and Scholasticism," 3-46. In addition to Franciscan scholars themselves, Richard Cross regards Franciscan thought in a very positive light; see Cross' "Where angels Fear to Tread: Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy," *Antonianum* 76 (2001): 1-36; see also Mary Beth Ingham, "Re-situating Scotist Thought," *Modern Theology* 21:4 (2005): 609-18; Marilyn McCord Adams, in various works; Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages, passim*; Thomas Williams, "The Doctrine of Univocity of True and Salutary," *Modern Theology* 21:4 (2005): 575-85.

The line of inquiry that interests me at present concerns the extent to which one can even speak of a relationship between Franciscan and modern thought. The chapters of this thesis obliquely indicate that thirteenth-century Franciscans, especially Bonaventure, did not use their ideas as modern thinkers used them. They did not ask their questions as modern thinkers have asked them. Take, for example, the Franciscan concern regarding the possibility of knowledge and the ‘threat’ of scepticism. For Bonaventure and even Duns Scotus, this was not really a live concern. The two took certitude as a given and simply sought to explain *why* it is a given.⁹¹⁵ In their view, certitude can only be seen as a given when knowledge is defined along Franciscan lines. To assert this was to legitimize the Franciscan intellectual life. The preoccupation with cognitive certitude was not indicative of a genuine concern regarding scepticism. Instead, the problem of certitude was deliberately introduced in the effort Bonaventure in particular made to exonerate the Franciscan order of accusations that were being levelled against it by those that questioned the viability of its intellectual life.

The recognizably proto-modern ‘subjective turn’ that originally takes place in the writings of Bonaventure, to take another example, is not a characteristically modern turn, inasmuch as the turn is to the source of *divine* help within. Furthermore, it does not seem plausible to locate the source of rationalism and fideism in the Franciscan tradition, inasmuch as the Franciscans were not rationalists nor fideists themselves. Even if they defined faith, reason, and their inter-relationship in ways that would enable others to create those extremes, they did not assume the extremes nor did they worry in the modern way whether faith and reason defined in an extreme sense can be reconciled. Franciscan definitions of faith and reason were offered for the sake of giving systematic expression to Francis’ experience and validating it in an academic setting, in the case of Bonaventure, and making Franciscan thought consistent, in that of Scotus. Albeit in their own way, thirteenth-century Franciscans saw faith and reason as reconcilable and as reconciled.

These examples underscore the fact that Franciscan ideas served purposes in the Franciscan context which are distinguishable from the purposes they had in the

⁹¹⁵ Katherine H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 76.

modern context. In the Franciscan tradition itself, for instance, the emphasis on the primacy of love highlighted that human endeavours really do amount to nothing if not motivated by love. Ideas that are meant to help can cause harm if they are not utilized in the desire to serve. Words are meaningless if one does not substantiate them with actions, and changing one's behaviour goes hand-in-hand and even ahead of changing one's mind.

Additionally, the theory concerning the *a priori* knowledge of the transcendentals held Franciscans to a high standard of purity and integrity and encouraged personal commitment to Christ. Within the Franciscan and thus the Christian context, Franciscan ideals encouraged the friars and their followers to lead holy and selfless lives of service out of love for Christ. They did so in the Middle Ages, and they still do. For these reasons, it does not seem fair to affirm that the ideas drawn from the Franciscan tradition which had a detrimental impact in modernity are problematic in themselves. They clearly are not, even if they become problematic when they are removed from their original context and utilized for purposes the Franciscans never intended.

This appears to have been the fate of Franciscan thought in some modern systems of thought. Insofar as they never intended or foresaw those developments, however, Franciscans cannot be held responsible for modern developments. As Olivier Boulnois has argued, it is essential to differentiate between the project of conducting a genealogy of modern thought, and the project of determining where the responsibility for modern developments lies.⁹¹⁶

In light of Boulnois' observation, it only seems justifiable to hold Franciscan thinkers accountable for the consequences of their ideas in an indirect sense, that is, to the extent they had already begun to use Franciscan ideas in a context and for a purpose for which they were not intended. Bonaventure appears to have done this

⁹¹⁶ See Olivier Boulnois, "Reading Duns Scotus: From History to Philosophy," trans. F.C. Bauerschmidt in *Modern Theology* 21:4 (2005): 603-8. In his *Être et représentation* and *Duns Scot, la rigueur de la charité* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1998), Boulnois traces the rise of modern 'onto-theology' and voluntarism, respectively. Though he recognizes Duns Scotus as a pivotal figure in Western philosophical history along with proponents of Radical Orthodoxy, he stresses the importance of distinguishing genealogical work on modernity such as his own from the project of identifying the 'inventors' of modernity and repairing the problems they created.

when he utilized Franciscan ideals, which were intended to promote moral purity and service within a Christian context, and more specifically, amongst those that had committed themselves to a life of Franciscan ministry, and transformed them into a normative cognitive standard, for the sake of legitimizing the Franciscan presence in the academic context.

However he may have attempted to justify this effort as one that is conducive to the fulfilment of Francis' wishes, it patently was not.⁹¹⁷ Francis had called his followers to serve the poor and downtrodden, at the expense of involvement in academic life. In arguing to the contrary and going even further to transform Franciscan principles which were meant to support and motivate a particular sort of ministerial life into a universally applicable philosophical standard, Bonaventure had already begun to de-contextualize the Franciscan vision.

Although Bonaventure could not have known the future outcome of his efforts, he was not without recourse to an objective perspective. Augustine had long since explained the sense in which objectivity can be obtained, namely, by refusing to prize anything, even intellectual or spiritual goals, as the Highest Goods they cannot be. An orientation towards the objective of knowing that Good which is common to all makes it possible to evaluate circumstances under consideration from a perspective that is objective, not because it is all-encompassing, but because it precludes attitudes like pride, envy, fear, and malice that motivate those that reduce the all-inclusive Good to a particular good that cannot encompass all. In maintaining an orientation towards the common Good, Augustine affirmed, one lives in imitation of Christ. Since there are as many ways of being oriented to the Father, through the Son in the Spirit as there are human spirits, every conceivable way of imitating Christ is opened up and encouraged by his account.

In equating the imitation of Christ with the literal imitation of Francis, albeit a Francis whose ministerial guidelines had been redefined as philosophical ones,

⁹¹⁷ John Moorman goes so far as to say that Bonaventure never understood Francis' vision at all in *A History of the Franciscan Order*, 140-41; see also E. Randolph Daniel, "St Bonaventure: A Faithful Disciple of St. Francis? A Re-examination of the Question," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274-1974*, vol. 2 (1973): 170-87. To this same effect, J. Guy Bougerol quotes friar Jacopone da Todi, who famously proclaimed that "accursed Paris is destroying Assisi" (*Introduction*, 13).

Bonaventure restricted the range of possible ways to imitate Christ. He made the ethical standard to which Francis held Franciscans an intellectual standard to which he thought all were subject. In these ways, he de-contextualized the Franciscan vision and thus contributed indirectly to making later, larger efforts to do so possible.

Though late Medieval Franciscans are not directly responsible for the modern misuses of their ideals, the problems that resulted from the abuses of their ideas remain. There is the problem of proving that knowledge is possible, and how. There is the problem of reconciling faith with reason. There is the problem of re-integrating considerations concerning God Himself and ordinary life. These are problems the Augustinian intellectual tradition is particularly well suited to address, not because it is intrinsically superior to the Franciscan tradition but because it is a different type of tradition, with a broader purpose.

Augustine's purpose was to articulate an account of God that would enable those made in His image to make the best of whatever historical-philosophical situation presented itself and to show how the intellectual resources available in that situation can be appropriated in the interest of making faith in God intelligible to both the faithful and the faithless. The purposes of Francis were far more specific. His concern was to give his followers the resources they required to live the life of poverty and service to which he had called them. Francis never tried to explain how to deal with philosophical perspectives and problems. He only advised Franciscans to avoid them, for the sake of staying focused on the tasks they had to hand.

By contrast, it was Augustine's intent to articulate a theory of knowledge with implicit instructions for embracing other philosophical perspectives and addressing philosophical problems. In order to deal with the perspectives and problems that have arisen in consequence of the de-contextualization of Franciscan thought in modernity, I submit that contemporary scholars must find a way to do *as* Augustine did, which will require just as much faith, philosophical acumen and ingenuity as it did in the time of Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. They must find a contemporarily relevant way to articulate a theory of knowledge based on the Augustinian assumption that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The main goal of this thesis was to identify why late thirteenth-century Franciscans abandoned the theory of knowledge by illumination they attributed to Augustine, after claiming to be his closest followers. In order to identify the cause of the account's decline, a great deal of preliminary work needed to be done. In the first place, I deemed it necessary to determine what illumination meant in Augustine's own thought. The question regarding the function he assigns illumination in cognition is a controversial one which has yet to be fully resolved.

Normally, Augustinian illumination is interpreted as an extrinsic influence, albeit in a number of different ways. For this reason, it is set against Aquinas' interpretation, according to which the divine light imparts an intrinsic power. I suggested that the reason extrinsic interpretations of Augustine have prevailed has little to do with the fact that they accurately represent the bishop's views on illumination and much to do with the fact that they reflect the view of revelation Augustine's late Medieval and modern readers have needed him to hold in order for their own views to seem supportable.

For the sake of determining what Augustine's view on the role of *divine* illumination really was, I reasoned it seemed best to begin my investigation by attending to the *theological* assumptions that underlie the account. This is an approach that is not usually taken by interpreters of Augustine's illumination theory, who tend to turn immediately to texts in which Augustine explicitly handles issues pertaining to knowledge and illumination. There are a number of likely reasons why past scholars have not extensively analyzed Augustine's illumination theory in its theological context, especially that which is provided by his *De Trinitate*. In discussing Augustine, I mentioned the work of some recent scholars who have made such an analysis possible through their groundbreaking work on Augustine's theological thought.

The Trinitarian doctrine presented in *De Trinitate* was the first one I considered in my study of Augustine. This line of inquiry soon exposed the bishop's understanding of the *imago dei* as an intrinsic intellectual gift and highlighted the

unifying nature of the cognitive work the intellect, as an image, performs. By means of a cognitive process which resembles abstraction, Augustine explained that the intellect comes to increasingly participate subjectively in a universal objective order, which is God's knowledge of Himself in all things.

After establishing that, I turned to consider the effects of the fall and redemption on the image, as Augustine described them, and the process involved in re-conforming to the image of God as he outlined it. This process was one of knowing by negation. It required the knower to cultivate the skill of evaluating all the things that are 'not God' in view of the fact that they cannot make or break human happiness, since this can only be found in God, the Highest Good. The seven psychological analogies Augustine presented in the second half of his treatise on the Trinity, I discovered, were designed to help the reader form a habit of reasoning in faith, and by these means, undergo the restoration of the image of God.

The study of *De Trinitate* I conducted for the sake of comprehending the purpose of illumination established to my mind that it is a work with a specific pedagogical purpose. In the first half, Augustine gave a straightforward presentation of his Trinitarian doctrine, or a positive theological account. In the second half, he explained what is involved in applying the doctrine of the Trinity, or conforming to the image of God. He gave a negative theological account. In the first and second halves of the work, respectively, consequently, Augustine showed his readers how to directly and indirectly interpret the message of Scripture, in which God's Triune nature is gradually revealed through the Person and work of His Son. In short, He demonstrated how to imitate Christ.

For Augustine, the imitation of Christ entailed the use of one's intrinsic powers for their intended purpose, namely, to glorify the Father. Illumination proved to be an illustration of the process of conforming to God's image through which a person learned to do this, or to 'be themselves'. By outlining the process of conforming or illumination in his *De Trinitate*, Augustine instructed his readers in the way to harness all their abilities, indeed, the whole of the human spirit, in and for the purposes of faith. Implicitly, my arguments along these lines gestured towards

the continuity that exists between the early ‘philosophical’ and later theological writings of Augustine.

From Augustine, I turned to the eleventh century Benedictine Anselm of Canterbury. Although scholars generally recognize that there is great continuity of thought between Augustine and Anselm, they are not always as clear when it comes to indicating wherein the continuity lies. My goal was to locate the continuity of thought on illumination in Augustine and Anselm at the theological source of the continuity. I went through the same steps in the chapter on Anselm as I did in Augustine, discussing the monk’s doctrine of God, the *imago dei*, the fall, redemption, and conformity to God’s image. Although Anselm’s forms of argumentation differed fairly significantly from Augustine’s in most cases, I insisted that his decision to adopt new methods contributed to an effort to convey the sense of Augustine’s ideas in a way that was relevant to the concerns of his readers. By these means, I determined that being an Augustinian means doing *as* Augustine does, not necessarily *what* Augustine does.

In the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, I found that Anselm did more or less as Augustine did in the two halves of his treatise on the Trinity. He had the same theological-pedagogical project in mind when he composed the two tracts. Inasmuch as Anselm speculatively articulated an Augustinian Trinitarian doctrine in the former and showed how to practically apply it in the latter, his two tracts can be classed together with *De Trinitate* in a single literary genre.

Such conclusions proved particularly significant when it came to evaluating the *Proslogion* and the famous argument Anselm presents in it. Though the argument is often described an *a priori* proof for God’s existence, at the expense of attending to what the whole of the treatise actually communicates, I showed that it is in fact a ‘formula’ for conforming to God’s image, a resource for engaging in knowledge by negation, not unlike Augustine’s psychological analogies. Since Anselm testified that he received the argument in illumination and that its purpose is to increase illumination, I felt justified in concluding that illumination was for him, as it was for Augustine, an illustration of the process involved in conforming to the image of God.

After discussing Anselm, I traced the way divine illumination theory made the transition from the monastery to the university setting as it passed from the hands of Augustinians and Benedictines to Dominicans and above all Franciscans. In this effort, it was essential to cover the twelfth-century translation movements and the early Franciscan scholarly use of new resources provided by Richard of St. Victor and Avicenna especially. These researches highlighted how new theological and philosophical presuppositions appeared on the Western intellectual scene, at least in Franciscan thought, albeit in the disguise of traditional Augustinian and Anselmian arguments.

The Franciscan thinker Bonaventure is virtually universally hailed the last great proponent of the Medieval Augustinian tradition. This has much to do with the fact that Bonaventure consistently employed traditional Augustinian arguments and metaphors. The Seraphic Doctor's theory of knowledge by divine illumination, for instance, is commonly considered the hallmark of his Augustinianism. Moreover, his place at the end of a line of traditional Augustinian thinkers is supposedly confirmed by his advocacy of Anselm's 'ontological' argument.

The contention I bolstered was that there is in fact a great difference between the Franciscan thought of Bonaventure, articulated in Augustinian terms, and genuinely Augustinian thought. I sought to show that Bonaventure's primary goal was to give systematic expression to St. Francis' vision and even to transform the poverello's experience into a normative cognitive standard, in the interest of addressing polemical issues he faced as the order's Minister General. Bonaventure's appeals to the authority of Augustine, Anselm, and Pseudo-Dionysius should not be regarded as efforts to bolster their opinions, but to ground arguments in support of his innovative system in the way thirteenth-century scholastics went about doing this, namely, by invoking authorities. The rationale behind the attempt I made to differentiate Bonaventure from Augustine was that this seemed likely to help me understand why Bonaventure's successors rejected Augustinian illumination, even after he had so zealously championed it.

In order to identify wherein the differences lie and what they are, I took the same approach to interpreting Bonaventure's thought on illumination as I had done

in the cases of Augustine and Anselm. That is to say, I interpreted his illumination account as a function of his Trinitarian theology. On doing so, I found that the Victorine doctrine Bonaventure espoused generated an altogether unprecedented notion of the image of God and its cognitive operations. From the beginning, Franciscans had turned to Avicenna for philosophical resources suited to explaining these matters. For Bonaventure, who here betrayed the influence of Avicenna upon him, the human mind was the *imago dei* because it possessed an intuitive knowledge of Being, which enabled it to accurately and certainly conceive of beings inside, outside, and above itself.

The intuition of being instilled in the human person the power to abstract as Avicenna had conceived abstraction, namely, as the act of extracting immediate knowledge of a fixed essence from one of its material instantiations. Inasmuch as that intuitive knowledge was the result of an ongoing divine gift, however, the power to abstract was not entirely intrinsic or natural for Bonaventure. It was part supernatural, so far as God concurred with the human mind to help it abstract its ideas. In Bonaventure's thought, illumination illustrated this extrinsic concurrence. Bonaventure often referred to the act of abstraction as *contuitio*. For him, to *contuit* was simply to determine the correspondence between the thought of a being in one's own mind and the being as it was perfectly represented in the mind of God. By contrast to Augustine, who understood knowledge as 'objective participation', Bonaventure construed cognition as 'subjective representation'. Such representational knowledge, in his view, gave direct or positive even if finite insight into the existence and essence of the infinite Being that is the sum total of all possibly and actually existing beings.

To gain access to this great power of knowing, the mind simply had to reflect upon itself as the image of God, or reflect on its intuitive knowledge of Being, that makes the mind the adequate foundation or principle of all knowledge of beings. Since that Being is the divine Being, reflection upon it immediately confirms the existence of God, as through an ontological or *a priori* proof. When he argued this, Bonaventure invoked Anselm's argument and thus recast it along Avicennian lines, changing the way the 'proofs' for God's existence were thenceforward conceived. In Bonaventure's thought, Anselm's proof was not a conceptual resource for re-

conforming to the image of God on the intellect but the means through which the mind gained access to immediate even if partial knowledge of God which it had never lost.

On the basis of the assumption that the image of God was not effaced at the fall, Bonaventure implied that efforts to re-conform to it were unnecessary. His famous treatise on Christ likeness is his *Itinerarium*. This text is usually described as the last in a line of traditional Augustinian accounts of the mind's 'ascent' into God. My aim in expositing this text was to demonstrate that the Seraphic Doctor did not in fact give a truly Augustinian explanation of the process involved in conforming to God's image, and could not have done, inasmuch as he saw no need for conforming.

Instead, the Seraphic Doctor articulated in a traditional format and trusted terms a totally unprecedented account of Christ likeness, according to which conformity to Christ is not a matter of the intellect *and* the will but of the will alone. The motivation for affirming this, and for offering 'absolute' definitions of both knowledge and love, was to give an account in which likeness to Christ is nigh unto likeness to the life of Francis, which entailed poverty and other forms of self-abandonment. That motivation, in turn, was mainly polemical.

Although Bonaventure undeniably said *what* Augustine says in many cases, he manifestly did not do *as* Augustine did in expressing his theological and philosophical positions. For this reason, I concluded that he was not a genuine Augustinian but one of the first and foremost proponents of an utterly distinct Franciscan intellectual tradition, which deserves to be appreciated in its own right.

To throw the non-Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought on illumination into sharper relief and to reinforce the point that being an Augustinian means doing as Augustine did, I investigated the account of illumination and knowledge Aquinas offered in his *Summa Theologiae*. Ironically, Aquinas rather than his Franciscan contemporary Bonaventure has been accused of abandoning the traditional Augustinian intellectual path to God by rejecting Augustinian illumination and Anselm's argument in favour of an Aristotelian account of cognition. My research led me to conclude that Aquinas only challenged the Franciscan interpretations of these arguments. After doing so, moreover, he went on to

communicate the sense of Augustine's arguments concerning illumination by formulating an account of knowledge that was informed by the traditional Augustinian doctrines of God and God's image. Though he sought to do this in the most relevant forms of philosophical argumentation, which were drawn from Aristotle and other sources, he nonetheless described the cognitive process as a process of illumination.

Far from rejecting Augustine's account of knowledge by illumination, Aquinas upheld it by 'updating' it, that is, by conveying the sense of the original account in new forms of words. In the *Summa Theologiae*, he both articulated an Augustinian Trinitarian doctrine and instructed how to practically apply the doctrine in delineating his famous 'five ways', as Augustine had done with his analogies and Anselm with his argument. Inasmuch as he detailed what is involved in conforming to God's image and thus illumination over the course of the treatise, Aquinas produced a thirteenth-century counterpart to the theological-pedagogical works of Augustine and Anselm. Like theirs, his work was composed for an audience of exceptionally erudite readers with a high level of commitment to the faith.

By attending to the theological doctrines and motivations behind the philosophical decisions thirteenth-century thinkers made to adopt certain theories of knowledge, I found that the relationships of Bonaventure and Aquinas to Augustine were the reverse of what is commonly thought: Aquinas does and Bonaventure does not perpetuate Augustine's theory of knowledge by illumination. The received view amongst late Medieval historians which is to be contrasted with mine is that Augustine did not develop a precise theory of knowledge; that he did not place much confidence on the competence of human reason; and that Franciscans like Bonaventure advanced his views. Late Medieval thinkers like Aquinas and Duns Scotus eventually abandoned illumination because they saw it as inferior to the Aristotelian theory of knowledge by abstraction, which was supposedly suited to producing absolutely true and certain knowledge.

The research that was presented here on Aquinas in particular intimated that the theories of knowledge formulated by the historical Augustine and the historical Aristotle are actually highly compatible, even if both are incompatible with the

Avicennized reading of Augustine that was espoused by Franciscan thinkers who claimed to be the champions of Augustine. One implication of this conclusion, incidentally, is that it tends to redraw the lines that demarcate late Medieval schools of thought. Though these schools are usually identified on the basis of philosophical allegiances to Augustine, Aristotle, or Averroes, my arguments hinted that these schools should actually be determined along theological lines. The major scholars of the late Medieval period were mendicant friars first and foremost who made decisions to use certain philosophical sources for the sake of promulgating the ideals they learned within their orders.

Scholastic method was designed to enable these scholars to present new ideas or to give expression to old ones on the basis of trusted authorities. This, in fact, was how arguments were advanced in the late Medieval university. Given that is the case, it does not seem sound to assume that an authority's views are truly being represented whenever they are invoked, or equally, that an authority's views are not implicitly perpetuated even where he is not mentioned. In sum, Medieval philosophical arguments should not be taken at face value. Rather, the reader must attend to the factors that determined the meaning of those arguments, which were generally theological.

A theological approach to interpreting Medieval arguments concerning illumination helped me identify the function the divine light performed in the thought of Augustine and to discern continuity of thought on the matter between Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, and discontinuity in the case of Bonaventure. All those preliminary efforts finally put me in a position to identify why illumination was abandoned by Franciscans in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. My criticisms of the two existing studies on the late Medieval decline of illumination theory arose as a result of the fact that neither took the study of Augustine himself as a point of departure, nor considered illumination in the thought of any Medieval figure from a theological standpoint.

By contrast to these accounts which identify the late Medieval cause of illumination's demise located in a preference for Aristotle over Augustine, I argued that Augustine's illumination account was not even the one Franciscans questioned.

Instead, illumination as Bonaventure defined it was gradually eliminated for two reasons. First, the standard of immediate knowledge Franciscan thinkers presupposed was incompatible with the notion that the divine light assists in knowing, since it seems to give recourse to the immediate vision of God. Second, the interference of the divine light threatened to undermine the integrity of the intellect. In the effort to remove these inconsistencies from the Franciscan understanding of cognition and thus promote that understanding, Duns Scotus and those like Olivi and Ghent that prepared the way for him carried Bonaventure's assumptions concerning cognition to their logical conclusions.

In some closing remarks about the connection between late Medieval Franciscan and modern thought, I acknowledged that there do seem to be affinities between the two. Yet I emphasized that Franciscan ideals had and still have a proper context and purpose which should be recognized and appreciated. Any detrimental consequences of their ideas should not be associated with the ideas themselves but with the removal of those ideas from their proper context. To the extent Bonaventure and those that followed him began to do this in the effort to vindicate the intellectual pursuits of the friars minor in the eyes of colleagues, one might say that they opened the door for the de-contextualization of their own ideas. Even so, they did not utilize their ideas or address their questions in the attitude of the modern thinker. Their theological and philosophical problems were not the ones that prevail today.

Still, the theological and philosophical problems of an epistemological nature, which resulted from the *misuse* of originally Franciscan resources remain and require a reckoning. For the task of identifying and repairing those problems, the conceptual resources Augustine has to offer seem particularly well suited. Those resources are to be found in Augustine's directions for making good of any philosophical situation by managing the concerns and appropriating the ideas that predominate in it from the standpoint of faith. To follow those directions in articulating a theory of knowledge by negation that draws on and thus converses with contemporary modes of philosophical thought would be to do as Augustine did when he argued that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge. It would be to re-instigate the trend of composing works in the Augustinian genre of theological-pedagogical works designed to help faithful readers cultivate a habit of directing

every thought to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, until everything that comes forth from the human spirit is a prayer, an experience of divine illumination.

Amen.

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